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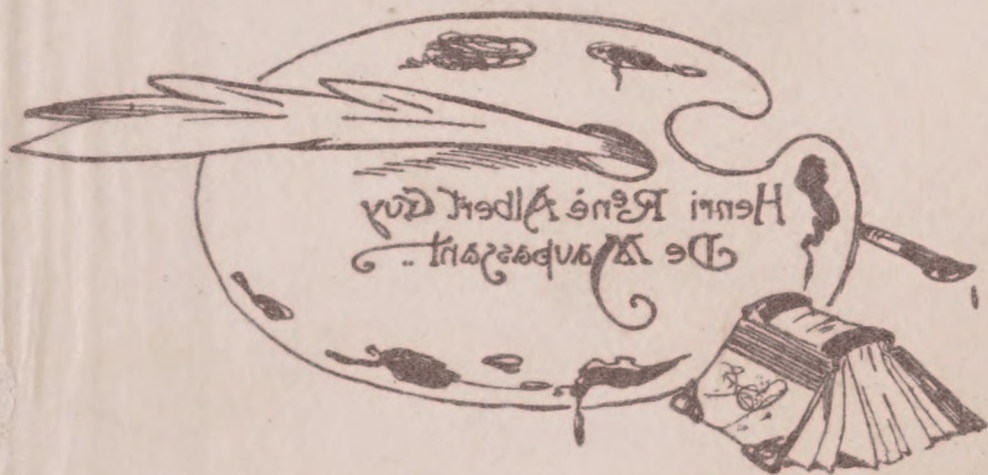
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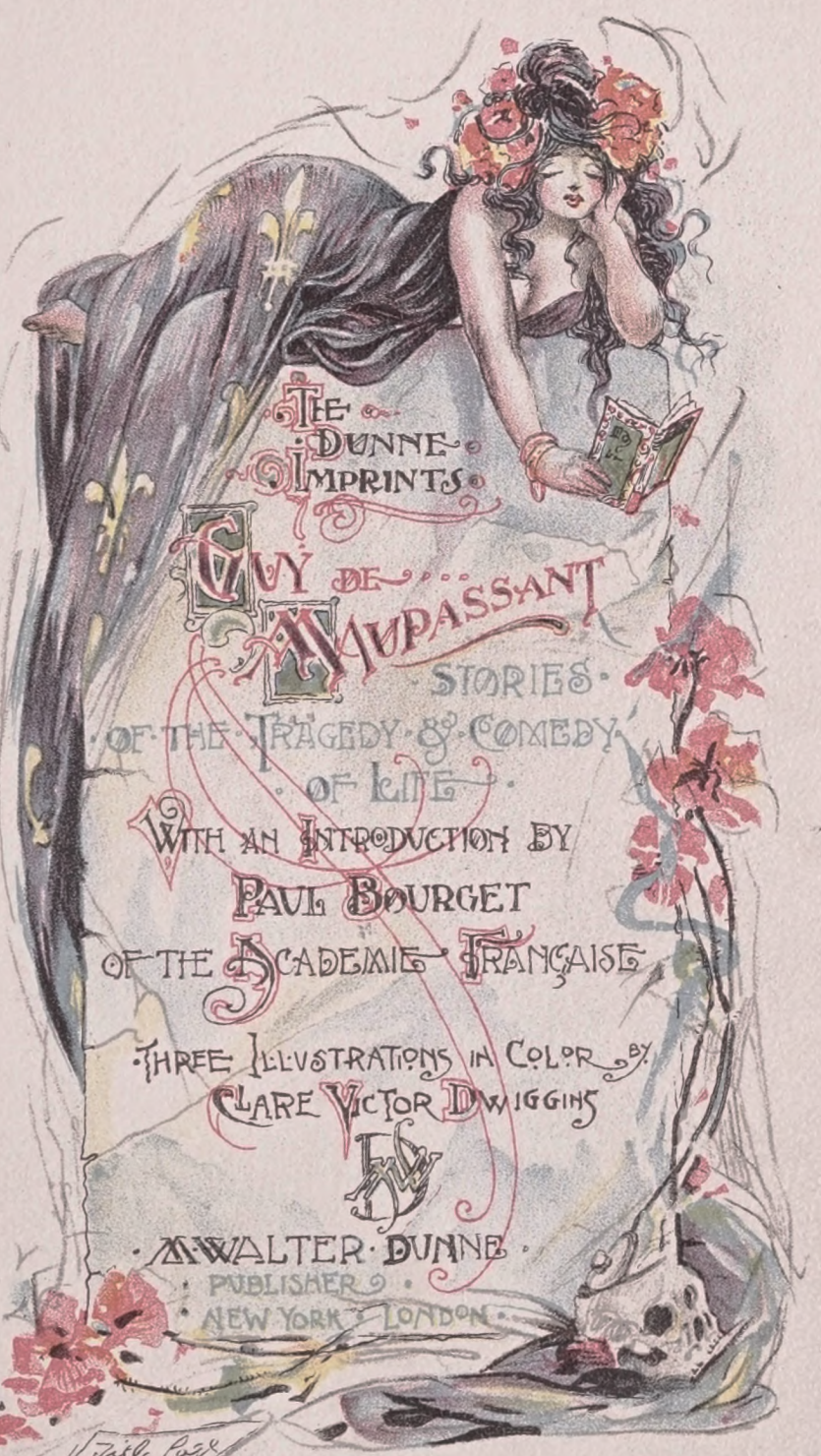
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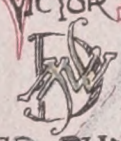
THE
DUNNE
IMPRINTS

GUY DE MAUPASSANT

STORIES
OF THE TRAGEDY & COMEDY
OF LIFE

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
PAUL BOURGET
OF THE ACADEMIE FRANÇAISE

THREE ILLUSTRATIONS IN COLOR BY
CLARE VICTOR DWIGGINS



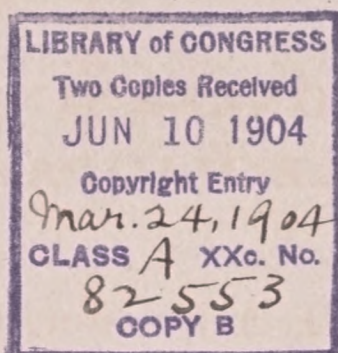
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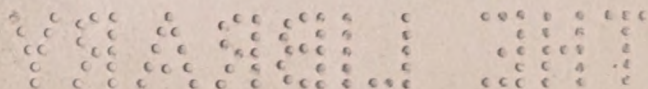
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CONCERNING GUY DE MAUPASSANT

F the French writers of romance of the latter part of the nineteenth century no one made a reputation as quickly as did Guy de Maupassant. Not one has preserved that reputation with more ease, not only during life, but in death. None so completely hides his personality in his glory. In an epoch of the utmost publicity, in which the most insignificant deeds of a celebrated man are spied, recorded, and commented on, the author of *Boule de Suif*, of *Pierre et Jean*, of *Notre Cœur*, found a way of effacing his personality in his work.

Of De Maupassant we know that he was born in Normandy about 1850; that he was the favorite pupil, if one may so express it, the literary *protège* of Gustave Flaubert; that he made

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his *début* late in 1880, with a novel inserted in a small collection, published by Emile Zola and his young friends, under the title, *The Soirées of Medan*; that subsequently he did not fail to publish stories and romances every year up to 1891, when a disease of the brain struck him down in the fullness of production; and that he died, finally, in 1893, without having recovered his reason.

We know, too, that he passionately loved a strenuous physical life and long journeys, particularly long journeys upon the sea. He owned a little sailing yacht, named after one of his books, *Bel-Ami*, in which he used to sojourn for weeks and months. These meager details are almost the only ones that have been gathered as food for the curiosity.

I leave the legendary side, which is always in evidence in the case of a celebrated man, — that gossip, for example, which avers that Maupassant was a high liver and a worldling. The very number of his volumes is a protest to the contrary. One could not write so large a number of pages in so small a number of years without the virtue of industry, a virtue incompatible with habits of dissipation. This does not mean that the writer of these great

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romances had no love for pleasure and had not tasted the world, but that for him these were secondary things. The psychology of his work ought, then, to find an interpretation other than that afforded by wholly false or exaggerated anecdotes. I wish to indicate here how this work, illumined by the three or four positive data which I have given, appears to me to demand it.

And first, what does that anxiety to conceal his personality prove, carried as it was to such an extreme degree? The answer rises spontaneously in the minds of those who have studied closely the history of literature. The absolute silence about himself, preserved by one whose position among us was that of a Tourgenief, or of a Mérimée, and of a Molière or a Shakespeare among the classic great, reveals, to a person of instinct, a nervous sensibility of extreme depth. There are many chances for an artist of his kind, however timid, or for one who has some grief, to show the depth of his emotion. To take up again only two of the names just cited, this was the case with the author of *Terres Vierges* and with the writer of *Colomba*.

A somewhat minute analysis of the novels

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and romances of Maupassant would suffice to demonstrate, even if we did not know the nature of the incidents which prompted them, that he also suffered from an excess of nervous emotionalism. Nine times out of ten, what is the subject of these stories to which freedom of style gives the appearance of health? A tragic episode. I cite, at random, *Mademoiselle Fifi*, *La Petite Roque*, *Inutile Beauté*, *Le Masque*, *Le Horla*, *L'Épreuve*, *Le Champ d'Oliviers*, among the novels, and among the romances, *Une Vie*, *Pierre et Jean*, *Fort comme la Mort*, *Notre Cœur*. His imagination aims to represent the human being as imprisoned in a situation at once insupportable and inevitable. The spell of this grief and trouble exerts such a power upon the writer that he ends stories commenced in pleasantry with some sinister drama. Let me instance *Saint-Antonin*, *A Midnight Revel*, *The Little Cask*, and *Old Amable*. You close the book at the end of these vigorous sketches, and feel how surely they point to constant suffering on the part of him who executed them.

Maupassant has been called a literary nihilist — but (and this is the second trait of his

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singular genius) in him nihilism finds itself co-existent with an animal energy so fresh and so intense that for a long time it deceives the closest observer. In an eloquent discourse, pronounced over his premature grave, Emile Zola well defined this illusion: "We congratulated him," said he, "upon that health which seemed unbreakable, and justly credited him with the soundest constitution of our band, as well as with the clearest mind and the sanest reason. It was then that this frightful thunderbolt destroyed him."

It is not exact to say that the lofty genius of De Maupassant was that of an absolutely sane man. We comprehend it to-day, and, on re-reading him, we find traces everywhere of his final malady. But it is exact to say that this wounded genius was, by a singular circumstance, the genius of a robust man. A physiologist would without doubt explain this anomaly by the coexistence of a nervous lesion, light at first, with a muscular, athletic temperament. Whatever the cause, the effect is undeniable. The skilled and dainty pessimism of De Maupassant was accompanied by a vigor and physique very unusual. His sensations are in turn those of a hunter and of a sailor,

who have, as the old French saying expressively puts it, "swift foot, eagle eye," and who are attuned to all the whisperings of nature.

The author of *Une Vie* and the writer of *Clara Jozul* resemble each other in a singular and analogous circumstance. Both achieved renown at the first blow, and by a masterpiece which they were able to equal but never surpass. Both were misanthropes early in life, and practised to the end the ancient advice that the disciple of Beyle carried upon his seal: *μηνήσο ἀπιστεῖν*, "Remember to distrust." And, at the same time, both had delicate, tender hearts under this affectation of cynicism, both were excellent sons, irreproachable friends, indulgent masters, and both were idolized by their inferiors. Both were worldly, yet still loved a wanderer's life; both joined to a constant taste for luxury an irresistible desire for solitude.

They are separated, however, by profound differences, which perhaps belong less to their nature than to that of the masters from whom they received their impulses: Stendhal, so alert, so mobile, after a youth passed in war and a ripe age spent in vagabond jour-

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neys, rich in experiences, immediate and personal; Flaubert, so poor in direct impressions, so paralyzed by his health, by his family, by his theories even, and so rich in reflections, for the most part solitary.

The theory of the mean of truth on one side, as the foundation of the subject, — “the humble truth,” as he termed it at the beginning of *Une Vie*, — and of the agonizing for beauty on the other side, in composition, determines the whole use that Maupassant made of his literary gifts. It helped to make more intense and more systematic that dainty yet dangerous pessimism which in him was innate. The middle-class personage, in wearisome society like ours, is always a caricature, and the happenings are nearly always vulgar. When one studies a great number of them, one finishes by looking at humanity from the angle of disgust and despair. The philosophy of the romances and novels of De Maupassant is so continuously and profoundly surprising that one becomes overwhelmed by it. It reaches limitations; it seems to deny that man is susceptible to grandeur, or that motives of a superior order can uplift and ennoble the soul, but it does so with a sorrow that is pro-

found. All that portion of the sentimental and moral world which in itself is the highest remains closed to it.

In revenge, this philosophy finds itself in a relation cruelly exact with the half-civilization of our day. By that I mean the poorly educated individual who has rubbed against knowledge enough to justify a certain egoism, but who is too poor in faculty to conceive an ideal, and whose native grossness is corrupted beyond redemption. Under his blouse, or under his coat — whether he calls himself Renardet, as does the foul assassin in *Petite Roque*, or Duroy, as does the sly hero of *Bel-Ami*, or Bretigny, as does the vile seducer of *Mont Oriol*, or Césaire, the son of Old Amable in the novel of that name — this degraded type abounds in Maupassant's stories, evoked with a ferocity almost jovial where it meets the robustness of temperament which I have pointed out, a ferocity which gives them a reality more exact still because the half-civilized person is often impulsive and, in consequence, the physical easily predominates. There, as elsewhere, the degenerate is everywhere a degenerate who gives the impression of being an ordinary man.

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There are quantities of men of this stamp in large cities. No writer has felt and expressed this complex temperament with more justice than De Maupassant, and, as he was an infinitely careful observer of *milieu* and landscape and all that constitutes a precise middle distance, his novels can be considered an irrefutable record of the social classes which he studied at a certain time and along certain lines. The Norman peasant and the Provençal peasant, for example; also the small office-holder, the gentleman of the provinces, the country squire, the clubman of Paris, the journalist of the boulevard, the doctor of the spa, the commercial artist, and, on the feminine side, the servant girl, the working girl, the *demigrisette*, the street girl, rich or poor, the gallant lady of the city and of the provinces, and the society woman — these are some of the figures that he has painted at many sittings, and whom he has used to such effect that the novels and romances in which they are painted have come to be history. Just as it is impossible to comprehend the Rome of the Cæsars without the work of Petronius, so is it impossible fully to comprehend the France of 1850-'90 without these stories of Maupas-

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sant. They are no more the whole image of the country than the *Satyricon* was the whole image of Rome, but what their author has wished to paint, he has painted to the life and with a brush that is graphic in the extreme.

If Maupassant had only painted, in general fashion, the characters and the phase of literature mentioned, he would not be distinguished from other writers of the group called "naturalists." His true glory is in the extraordinary superiority of his art. He did not invent it, and his method is not alien to that of *Madame Bovary*, but he knew how to give it a suppleness, a variety, and a freedom which were always wanting in Flaubert. The latter, in his best pages, is always strained. To use the expressive metaphor of the Greek athletes, he "smells of the oil." When one recalls that, when attacked by hysteric epilepsy, Flaubert postponed the crisis of the terrible malady by means of sedatives, this strained atmosphere of labor — I was going to say of stupor — which pervades his work is explained. He is an athlete, a runner, but one who drags at his feet a terrible weight. He is in the race only for the prize of effort, an effort of which every motion reveals the intensity.

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Maupassant, on the other hand, if he suffered from a nervous lesion, gave no sign of it, except in his heart. His intelligence was bright and lively, and above all his imagination, served by senses always on the alert, preserved for some years an astonishing freshness of direct vision. If his art was due to Flaubert, it is no more belittling to him than if one call Raphael an imitator of Perugini.

Like Flaubert, he excelled in composing a story, in distributing the facts with subtle gradation, in bringing in at the end of a familiar dialogue something startlingly dramatic, but such composition, with him, seems easy, and while the descriptions are marvelously well established in his stories, the reverse is true of Flaubert's, which always appear a little veneered. Maupassant's phrasing, however dramatic it may be, remains easy and flowing.

Maupassant always sought for large and harmonious rhythm in his deliberate choice of terms, always chose sound, wholesome language, with a constant care for technical beauty. Inheriting from his master an instrument already forged, he wielded it with a surer skill. In the quality of his style, at once

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so firm and clear, so gorgeous yet so sober, so supple and so strong, he equals the writers of the seventeenth century. His method, so deeply and simply French, succeeds in giving an indescribable "tang" to his descriptions. If observation from nature imprints upon his tales the strong accent of reality, the prose in which they are shrined so conforms to the genius of the race as to smack of the soil.

It is enough that the critics of to-day place Guy de Maupassant among our classic writers. He has his place in the ranks of pure French genius, with the Regniers, the La Fontaines, the Molières. And those signs of secret ill divined everywhere under this wholesome prose surround it, for those who knew and loved him, with a pathos that is inexpressible.

Paul Bourget

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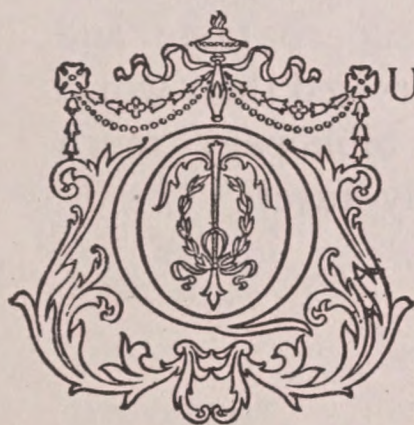
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A HISTORY OF THE BINDING OF THIS VOLUME

Facsimile of a Celebrated French Binding of the Sixteenth Century, Executed for Queen Catherine De Medici.



QUEEN CATHERINE DE MEDICI in youth and in maturer years was a lover of the beautiful in art and in literature. Her love for literature showed itself not only in the choice of her

books but in the affectionate care she manifested in selecting and supervising the bindings placed upon them. Her artistic genius came to her by descent, and was celebrated in verse by no less a poet than Ronsard.

This binding is a facsimile of the cover placed upon the works of Dionysius the Areopagite by command of Queen Catherine in 1560. The Binder was Claude Picques, *relieur* to King Henri II. The original color was a seal-brown morocco, the sides being decorated

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with a geometrical design outlined in gold and combined with arabesques. In the center of the first cover are the Arms of the Queen, ensigned with the royal crown, and surrounded by the Cordelière, or girdle, indicative of widowhood.

Queen Catherine's bindings are the work of the most skilful artists of her time, a fact which, added to her own superb taste and the care with which she supervised their work, makes these examples of bibliopeggy much sought after and exceedingly rare.



THE FALSE GEMS



LANTIN had met the young woman at a soirée, at the home of the assistant chief of his bureau, and at first sight had fallen madly in love with her.

She was the daughter of a country physician who had died some months previously. She had come to live in Paris with her mother, who visited much among her acquaintances, in the hope of making a favorable marriage for her daughter. They were poor and honest, quiet and unaffected.

The young girl was a perfect type of the virtuous woman whom every sensible young man dreams of one day winning for life. Her simple beauty had the charm of angelic modesty, and the imperceptible smile which constantly hovered about her lips seemed to be the reflection of a pure and lovely soul. Her

De Maupassant

praises resounded on every side. People were never tired of saying: "Happy the man who wins her love! He could not find a better wife."

Now M. Lantin enjoyed a snug little income of \$700, and, thinking he could safely assume the responsibilities of matrimony, proposed to this model young girl and was accepted.

He was unspeakably happy with her; she governed his household so cleverly and economically that they seemed to live in luxury. She lavished the most delicate attentions on her husband, coaxed and fondled him, and the charm of her presence was so great that six years after their marriage M. Lantin discovered that he loved his wife even more than during the first days of their honeymoon.

He only felt inclined to blame her for two things: her love of the theater, and a taste for false jewelry. Her friends (she was acquainted with some officers' wives) frequently procured for her a box at the theater, often for the first representations of the new plays; and her husband was obliged to accompany her, whether he willed or not, to these amusements, though they bored him excessively after a day's labor at the office.

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After a time, M. Lantin begged his wife to get some lady of her acquaintance to accompany her. She was at first opposed to such an arrangement; but, after much persuasion on his part, she finally consented — to the infinite delight of her husband.

Now, with her love for the theater came also the desire to adorn her person. True, her costumes remained as before, simple, and in the most correct taste; but she soon began to ornament her ears with huge rhinestones which glittered and sparkled like real diamonds. Around her neck she wore strings of false pearls, and on her arms bracelets of imitation gold.

Her husband frequently remonstrated with her, saying:

“My dear, as you cannot afford to buy real diamonds, you ought to appear adorned with your beauty and modesty alone, which are the rarest ornaments of your sex.”

But she would smile sweetly, and say:

“What can I do? I am so fond of jewelry. It is my only weakness. We cannot change our natures.”

Then she would roll the pearl necklaces around her fingers, and hold up the bright

gems for her husband's admiration, gently coaxing him:

"Look! are they not lovely? One would swear they were real."

M. Lantin would then answer, smilingly:

"You have Bohemian tastes, my dear."

Often of an evening, when they were enjoying a *tête-à-tête* by the fireside, she would place on the tea-table the leather box containing the "trash," as M. Lantin called it. She would examine the false gems with a passionate attention, as though they were in some way connected with a deep and secret joy; and she often insisted on passing a necklace around her husband's neck, and laughing heartily would exclaim: "How droll you look!" Then she would throw herself into his arms and kiss him affectionately.

One evening in winter she attended the opera, and on her return was chilled through and through. The next morning she coughed, and eight days later she died of inflammation of the lungs.

M. Lantin's despair was so great that his hair became white in one month. He wept unceasingly; his heart was torn with grief, and his mind was haunted by the remembrance

The False Gems

of the smile, the voice — by every charm of his beautiful dead wife.

Time, the healer, did not assuage his grief. Often during office hours, while his colleagues were discussing the topics of the day, his eyes would suddenly fill with tears, and he would give vent to his grief in heartrending sobs. Everything in his wife's room remained as before her decease; and here he was wont to seclude himself daily and think of her who had been his treasure — the joy of his existence.

But life soon became a struggle. His income, which in the hands of his wife had covered all household expenses, was now no longer sufficient for his own immediate wants; and he wondered how she could have managed to buy such excellent wines, and such rare delicacies, things which he could no longer procure with his modest resources.

He incurred some debts and was soon reduced to absolute poverty. One morning, finding himself without a cent in his pocket, he resolved to sell something, and, immediately, the thought occurred to him of disposing of his wife's paste jewels. He cherished in his heart a sort of rancor against the false gems. They had always irritated him

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in the past, and the very sight of them spoiled somewhat the memory of his lost darling.

To the last days of her life she had continued to make purchases, bringing home new gems almost every evening. He decided to sell the heavy necklace which she seemed to prefer, and which, he thought, ought to be worth about six or seven francs; for although paste it was, nevertheless, of very fine workmanship.

He put it in his pocket and started out in search of a jeweler's shop. He entered the first one he saw; feeling a little ashamed to expose his misery, and also to offer such a worthless article for sale.

"Sir," said he to the merchant, "I would like to know what this is worth."

The man took the necklace, examined it, called his clerk and made some remarks in an undertone; then he put the ornament back on the counter, and looked at it from a distance to judge of the effect.

M. Lantin was annoyed by all this detail and was on the point of saying: "Oh! I know well enough it is not worth anything," when the jeweler said: "Sir, that necklace is worth from twelve to fifteen thousand francs; but I

The False Gems

could not buy it unless you tell me now whence it comes."

The widower opened his eyes wide and remained gaping, not comprehending the merchant's meaning. Finally he stammered: "You say — are you sure?" The other replied dryly: "You can search elsewhere and see if anyone will offer you more. I consider it worth fifteen thousand at the most. Come back here if you cannot do better."

M. Lantin, beside himself with astonishment, took up the necklace and left the store. He wished time for reflection.

Once outside, he felt inclined to laugh, and said to himself: "The fool! Had I only taken him at his word! That jeweler cannot distinguish real diamonds from paste."

A few minutes after, he entered another store in the Rue de la Paix. As soon as the proprietor glanced at the necklace, he cried out:

"Ah, *parbleu!* I know it well; it was bought here."

M. Lantin was disturbed, and asked:

"How much is it worth?"

"Well, I sold it for twenty thousand francs. I am willing to take it back for eighteen thou-

sand when you inform me, according to our legal formality, how it comes to be in your possession."

This time M. Lantin was dumbfounded. He replied:

"But — but — examine it well. Until this moment I was under the impression that it was paste."

Said the jeweler:

"What is your name, sir?"

"Lantin. I am in the employ of the Minister of the Interior. I live at No. 16 Rue des Martyrs."

The merchant looked through his books, found the entry, and said: "That necklace was sent to Mme. Lantin's address, 16 Rue des Martyrs, July 20, 1876."

The two men looked into each other's eyes — the widower speechless with astonishment, the jeweler scenting a thief. The latter broke the silence by saying:

"Will you leave this necklace here for twenty-four hours? I will give you a receipt."

"Certainly," answered M. Lantin, hastily. Then, putting the ticket in his pocket, he left the store.

The False Gems

He wandered aimlessly through the streets, his mind in a state of dreadful confusion. He tried to reason, to understand. His wife could not afford to purchase such a costly ornament. Certainly not. But, then, it must have been a present! — a present! — a present from whom? Why was it given her?

He stopped and remained standing in the middle of the street. A horrible doubt entered his mind — she? Then all the other gems must have been presents, too! The earth seemed to tremble beneath him — the tree before him was falling — throwing up his arms, he fell to the ground, unconscious. He recovered his senses in a pharmacy into which the passers-by had taken him, and was then taken to his home. When he arrived he shut himself up in his room and wept until nightfall. Finally, overcome with fatigue, he threw himself on the bed, where he passed an uneasy, restless night.

The following morning he arose and prepared to go to the office. It was hard to work after such a shock. He sent a letter to his employer requesting to be excused. Then he remembered that he had to return to the jeweler's. He did not like the idea; but he

could not leave the necklace with that man. So he dressed and went out.

It was a lovely day; a clear blue sky smiled on the busy city below, and men of leisure were strolling about with their hands in their pockets.

Observing them, M. Lantin said to himself: "The rich, indeed, are happy. With money it is possible to forget even the deepest sorrow. One can go where one pleases, and in travel find that distraction which is the surest cure for grief. Oh! if I were only rich!"

He began to feel hungry, but his pocket was empty. He again remembered the necklace. Eighteen thousand francs! Eighteen thousand francs! What a sum!

He soon arrived in the Rue de la Paix, opposite the jeweler's. Eighteen thousand francs! Twenty times he resolved to go in, but shame kept him back. He was hungry, however, — very hungry, and had not a cent in his pocket. He decided quickly, ran across the street in order not to have time for reflection, and entered the store.

The proprietor immediately came forward, and politely offered him a chair; the clerks glanced at him knowingly.

The False Gems

"I have made inquiries, M. Lantin," said the jeweler, "and if you are still resolved to dispose of the gems, I am ready to pay you the price I offered."

"Certainly, sir," stammered M. Lantin.

Whereupon the proprietor took from a drawer eighteen large bills, counted and handed them to M. Lantin, who signed a receipt and with a trembling hand put the money into his pocket.

As he was about to leave the store, he turned toward the merchant, who still wore the same knowing smile, and lowering his eyes, said:

"I have — I have other gems which I have received from the same source. Will you buy them also?"

The merchant bowed: "Certainly, sir."

M. Lantin said gravely: "I will bring them to you." An hour later he returned with the gems.

The large diamond earrings were worth twenty thousand francs; the bracelets thirty-five thousand; the rings, sixteen thousand; a set of emeralds and sapphires, fourteen thousand; a gold chain with solitaire pendant, forty thousand — making the sum of one hundred and forty-three thousand francs.

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The jeweler remarked, jokingly:

"There was a person who invested all her earnings in precious stones."

M. Lantin replied, seriously:

"It is only another way of investing one's money."

That day he lunched at Voisin's and drank wine worth twenty francs a bottle. Then he hired a carriage and made a tour of the Bois, and as he scanned the various turnouts with a contemptuous air he could hardly refrain from crying out to the occupants:

"I, too, am rich! I am worth two hundred thousand francs."

Suddenly he thought of his employer. He drove up to the office, and entered gaily, saying:

"Sir, I have come to resign my position. I have just inherited three hundred thousand francs."

He shook hands with his former colleagues and confided to them some of his projects for the future; then he went off to dine at the Café Anglais.

He seated himself beside a gentleman of aristocratic bearing, and during the meal informed the latter confidentially that he had

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just inherited a fortune of four hundred thousand francs.

For the first time in his life he was not bored at the theater, and spent the remainder of the night in a gay frolic.

Six months afterward he married again. His second wife was a very virtuous woman, with a violent temper. She caused him much sorrow.



The Fifth Lesson

For the first time in his life, the young man
felt a sense of peace and joy. He had been
suffering from a long illness, and now he was
well. He had been in the hospital for many
months, and now he was home. He had been
in the hospital for many months, and now he
was home. He had been in the hospital for
many months, and now he was home. He had
been in the hospital for many months, and
now he was home. He had been in the hospital
for many months, and now he was home.

SIMON'S PAPA



NOON had just struck. The school-door opened and the youngsters streamed out tumbling over one another in their haste to get out quickly. But instead of promptly dispersing and going home to dinner, as was their daily wont, they stopped a few paces off, broke up into knots and set to whispering.

The fact was that that morning Simon, the son of La Blanchotte, had, for the first time, attended school.

They had all of them in their families heard of La Blanchotte; and although in public she was welcome enough, the mothers among themselves treated her with compassion of a somewhat disdainful kind, which the children had caught without in the least knowing why.

As for Simon himself, they did not know

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him, for he never went abroad, and did not play around with them through the streets of the village or along the banks of the river. So they loved him but little; and it was with a certain delight, mingled with astonishment, that they gathered in groups this morning, repeating to each other this sentence, concocted by a lad of fourteen or fifteen who appeared to know all about it, so sagaciously did he wink: "You know Simon — well, he has no papa."

La Blanchotte's son appeared in his turn upon the threshold of the school.

He was seven or eight years old, rather pale, very neat, with a timid and almost awkward manner.

He was making his way back to his mother's house when the various groups of his school-fellows, perpetually whispering, and watching him with the mischievous and heartless eyes of children bent upon playing a nasty trick, gradually surrounded him and ended by inclosing him altogether. There he stood amid them, surprised and embarrassed, not understanding what they were going to do with him. But the lad who had brought the news, puffed up with the success he had met with, demanded:

Simon's Papa

"What do you call yourself?"

He answered: "Simon."

"Simon what?" retorted the other.

The child, altogether bewildered, repeated: "Simon."

The lad shouted at him: "You must be named Simon something! That is not a name — Simon indeed!"

And he, on the brink of tears, replied for the third time:

"I am named Simon."

The urchins began laughing. The lad triumphantly lifted up his voice: "You can see plainly that he has no papa."

A deep silence ensued. The children were dumbfounded by this extraordinary, impossibly monstrous thing — a boy who had not a papa; they looked upon him as a phenomenon, an unnatural being, and they felt rising in them the hitherto inexplicable pity of their mothers for La Blanchotte. As for Simon, he had propped himself against a tree to avoid falling, and he stood there as if paralyzed by an irreparable disaster. He sought to explain, but he could think of no answer for them, no way to deny this horrible charge that he had no papa. At last he

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shouted at them quite recklessly : " Yes, I have one."

" Where is he? " demanded the boy.

Simon was silent, he did not know. The children shrieked, tremendously excited. These sons of toil, nearly related to animals, experienced the cruel craving which makes the fowls of a farmyard destroy one of their own kind as soon as it is wounded. Simon suddenly spied a little neighbor, the son of a widow, whom he had always seen, as he himself was to be seen, quite alone with his mother.

" And no more have you," he said, " no more have you a papa."

" Yes," replied the other, " I have one."

" Where is he? " rejoined Simon.

" He is dead," declared the brat with superb dignity, " he is in the cemetery, is my papa."

A murmur of approval rose amid the scapegraces, as if the fact of possessing a papa dead in a cemetery made their comrade big enough to crush the other one who had no papa at all. And these rogues, whose fathers were for the most part evildoers, drunkards, thieves, and ill-treaters of their wives, hustled each other as they pressed closer and closer to Simon, as

Simon's Papa

though they, the legitimate ones, would stifle in their pressure one who was beyond the law.

The lad next Simon suddenly put his tongue out at him with a waggish air and shouted at him:

“No papa! No papa!”

Simon seized him by the hair with both hands and set to work to demolish his legs with kicks, while he bit his cheek ferociously. A tremendous struggle ensued between the two boys, and Simon found himself beaten, torn, bruised, rolled on the ground in the middle of the ring of applauding little vagabonds. As he arose, mechanically brushing his little blouse all covered with dust with his hand, some one shouted at him:

“Go and tell your papa.”

He then felt a great sinking in his heart. They were stronger than he, they had beaten him and he had no answer to give them, for he knew it was true that he had no papa. Full of pride, he tried for some moments to struggle against the tears which were suffocating him. He had a choking fit, and then without cries he began to weep with great sobs which shook him incessantly. Then a fero-

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cious joy broke out among his enemies, and, just like savages in fearful festivals, they took one another by the hand and danced in a circle about him as they repeated in refrain:

“No papa! No papa!”

But suddenly Simon ceased sobbing. Frenzy overtook him. There were stones under his feet; he picked them up and with all his strength hurled them at his tormentors. Two or three were struck and ran away yelling, and so formidable did he appear that the rest became panic-stricken. Cowards, like a jeering crowd in the presence of an exasperated man, they broke up and fled. Left alone, the little thing without a father set off running toward the fields, for a recollection had been awakened which nerved his soul to a great determination. He made up his mind to drown himself in the river.

He remembered, in fact, that eight days ago a poor devil who begged for his livelihood had thrown himself into the water because he had no more money. Simon had been there when they fished him out again; and the sight of the fellow, who had seemed to him so miserable and ugly, had then impressed him — his pale cheeks, his long drenched beard, and his open

Simon's Papa

eyes being full of calm. The bystanders had said:

“He is dead.”

And some one had added:

“He is quite happy now.”

So Simon wished to drown himself also because he had no father, just as the wretched being did who had no money.

He reached the water and watched it flowing. Some fishes were rising briskly in the clear stream and occasionally made little leaps and caught the flies on the surface. He stopped crying in order to watch them, for their feeding interested him vastly. But, at intervals, as in the lulls of a tempest, when tremendous gusts of wind snap off trees and then die away, this thought would return to him with intense pain:

“I am about to drown myself because I have no papa.”

It was very warm and fine weather. The pleasant sunshine warmed the grass; the water shone like a mirror; and Simon enjoyed for some minutes the happiness of that languor which follows weeping, desirous even of falling asleep there upon the grass in the warmth of noon.

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A little green frog leaped from under his feet. He endeavored to catch it. It escaped him. He pursued it and lost it three times following. At last he caught it by one of its hind legs and began to laugh as he saw the efforts the creature made to escape. It gathered itself up on its large legs and then with a violent spring suddenly stretched them out as stiff as two bars.

Its eyes stared wide open in their round, golden circle, and it beat the air with its front limbs, using them as though they were hands. It reminded him of a toy made with straight slips of wood nailed zigzag one on the other, which by a similar movement regulated the exercise of the little soldiers fastened thereon. Then he thought of his home and of his mother, and overcome by great sorrow he again began to weep. His limbs trembled; and he placed himself on his knees and said his prayers as before going to bed. But he was unable to finish them, for such hurried and violent sobs overtook him that he was completely overwhelmed. He thought no more, he no longer heeded anything around him, but was wholly given up to tears.

Suddenly a heavy hand was placed upon his shoulder, and a rough voice asked him:

Simon's Papa

"What is it that causes you so much grief, my fine fellow?"

Simon turned round. A tall workman, with a black beard and hair all curled, was staring at him good-naturedly. He answered with his eyes and throat full of tears:

"They have beaten me because — I — I have no papa — no papa."

"What!" said the man, smiling, "why, everybody has one."

The child answered painfully amid his spasms of grief:

"But I — I — I have none."

Then the workman became serious. He had recognized La Blanchotte's son, and although a recent arrival in the neighborhood he had a vague idea of her history.

"Well," said he, "console yourself, my boy, and come with me home to your mother. She will give you a papa."

And so they started on the way, the big one holding the little one by the hand. The man smiled afresh, for he was not sorry to see this Blanchotte, who by popular report was one of the prettiest girls in the country-side — and, perhaps, he said to himself, at the bottom of his heart, a gay lass

who had erred once might very well err again.

They arrived in front of a very neat little white house.

"There it is," exclaimed the child, and he cried: "Mamma."

A woman appeared, and the workman instantly left off smiling, for he at once perceived that there was no more fooling to be done with the tall pale girl, who stood austere at her door as though to defend from one man the threshold of that house where she had already been betrayed by another. Intimidated, his cap in his hand, he stammered out:

"See, Madame, I have brought you back your little boy, who had lost himself near the river."

But Simon flung his arms about his mother's neck and told her, as he again began to cry:

"No, mamma, I wished to drown myself, because the others had beaten me — had beaten me — because I have no papa."

A burning redness covered the young woman's cheeks, and, hurt to the quick, she embraced her child passionately, while the tears coursed down her face. The man, much moved, stood there, not knowing how to get

Simon's Papa

away. But Simon suddenly ran to him and said:

“Will you be my papa?”

A deep silence ensued. La Blanchotte, dumb and tortured with shame, leaned against the wall, her hands upon her heart. The child, seeing that no answer was made him, replied:

“If you do not wish it, I shall return to drown myself.”

The workman took the matter as a jest and answered laughing:

“Why, yes, I wish it, certainly.”

“What is your name, then,” went on the child, “so that I may tell the others when they wish to know your name?”

“Philip,” answered the man.

Simon was silent a moment so that he might get the name well into his memory; then he stretched out his arms, quite consoled, and said:

“Well, then, Philip, you are my papa.”

The workman, lifting him from the ground, kissed him hastily on both cheeks, and then strode away quickly.

When the child returned to school next day he was received with a spiteful laugh, and at

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the end of school, when the lads were on the point of recommencing, Simon threw these words at their heads as he would have cast a stone: "He is named Philip, my papa."

Yells of delight burst out from all sides.

"Philip who? Philip what? What on earth is Philip? Where did you pick up your Philip?"

Simon answered nothing; and immovable in faith he defied them with his eyes, ready to be martyred rather than fly before them. The schoolmaster came to his rescue and he returned home to his mother.

For a space of three months, the tall workman, Philip, frequently passed by La Blanchotte's house, and sometimes made bold to speak to her when he saw her sewing near the window. She answered him civilly, always sedately, never joking with him, nor permitting him to enter her house. Notwithstanding this, being, like all men, a bit of a coxcomb, he imagined that she was often rosier than usual when she chatted with him.

But a fallen reputation is so difficult to recover, and always remains so fragile that, in spite of the shy reserve La Blanchotte maintained, they already gossiped in the neighborhood.

Simon's Papa

As for Simon, he loved his new papa much, and walked with him nearly every evening when the day's work was done. He went regularly to school and mixed in a dignified way with his schoolfellows without ever answering them back.

One day, however, the lad who had first attacked him said to him:

"You have lied. You have not a papa named Philip."

"Why do you say that?" demanded Simon, much disturbed.

The youth rubbed his hands. He replied:

"Because if you had one he would be your mamma's husband."

Simon was confused by the truth of this reasoning; nevertheless he retorted:

"He is my papa all the same."

"That can very well be," exclaimed the urchin with a sneer, "but that is not being your papa altogether."

La Blanchotte's little one bowed his head and went off dreaming in the direction of the forge belonging to old Loizon, where Philip worked.

This forge was entombed in trees. It was very dark there, the red glare of a formidable

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furnace alone lit up with great flashes five blacksmiths, who hammered upon their anvils with a terrible din. Standing enveloped in flame, they worked like demons, their eyes fixed on the red-hot iron they were pounding; and their dull ideas rising and falling with their hammers.

Simon entered without being noticed and quietly plucked his friend by the sleeve. Philip turned round. All at once the work came to a standstill and the men looked on very attentively. Then, in the midst of this unaccustomed silence, rose the little slender pipe of Simon:

"Philip, explain to me what the lad at La Michande has just told me, that you are not altogether my papa."

"And why that?" asked the smith.

The child replied in all innocence:

"Because you are not my mamma's husband."

No one laughed. Philip remained standing, leaning his forehead upon the back of his great hands, which held the handle of his hammer upright upon the anvil. He mused. His four companions watched him, and, like a tiny mite among these giants, Simon anx-

Simon's Papa

iously waited. Suddenly, one of the smiths, voicing the sentiment of all, said to Philip:

“All the same La Blanchotte is a good and honest girl, stalwart and steady in spite of her misfortune, and one who would make a worthy wife for an honest man.”

“That is true,” remarked the three others.

The smith continued:

“Is it the girl's fault if she has fallen? She had been promised marriage, and I know more than one who is much respected to-day and has sinned every bit as much.”

“That is true,” responded the three men in chorus.

He resumed:

“How hard she has toiled, poor thing, to educate her lad all alone, and how much she has wept since she no longer goes out, save to church, God only knows.”

“That also is true,” said the others.

Then no more was heard save the roar of the bellows which fanned the fire of the furnace. Philip hastily bent himself down to Simon:

“Go and tell your mamma that I shall come to speak to her.”

Then he pushed the child out by the shoul-

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ders. He returned to his work and in unison the five hammers again fell upon their anvils. Thus they wrought the iron until nightfall, strong, powerful, happy, like Vulcans satisfied. But as the great bell of a cathedral resounds upon feast days above the jingling of the other bells, so Philip's hammer, dominating the noise of the others, clanged second after second with a deafening uproar. His eye on the fire, he plied his trade vigorously, erect amid the sparks.

The sky was full of stars as he knocked at La Blanchotte's door. He had his Sunday blouse on, a fresh shirt, and his beard was trimmed. The young woman showed herself upon the threshold and said in a grieved tone:

"It is ill to come thus when night has fallen, Mr. Philip."

He wished to answer, but stammered and stood confused before her.

She resumed:

"And you understand quite well that it will not do that I should be talked about any more."

Then he said all at once:

"What does that matter to me, if you will be my wife!"

Simon's Papa

No voice replied to him, but he believed that he heard in the shadow of the room the sound of a body falling. He entered very quickly; and Simon, who had gone to his bed, distinguished the sound of a kiss and some words that his mother said very softly. Then he suddenly found himself lifted up by the hands of his friend, who, holding him at the length of his herculean arms, exclaimed to him:

“ You will tell your school-fellows that your papa is Philip Remy, the blacksmith, and that he will pull the ears of all who do you any harm.”

On the morrow, when the school was full and lessons were about to begin, little Simon stood up quite pale with trembling lips:

“ My papa,” said he in a clear voice, “ is Philip Remy, the blacksmith, and he has promised to box the ears of all who do me any harm.”

This time no one laughed any longer, for he was very well known, was Philip Remy, the blacksmith, and he was a papa of whom anyone in the world would be proud.

WAS IT A DREAM?



HAD loved her madly!

“Why does one love? Why does one love? How queer it is to see only one being in the world, to have only one thought in one’s mind, only one desire in the heart, and only one name on the lips — a name which comes up continually, rising, like the water in a spring, from the depths of the soul to the lips, a name which one repeats over and over again, which one whispers ceaselessly, everywhere, like a prayer.

“I am going to tell you our story, for love only has one, which is always the same. I met her and loved her; that is all. And for a whole year I have lived on her tenderness, on her caresses, in her arms, in her dresses, on her words, so completely wrapped up, bound, and absorbed in everything which came from

her, that I no longer cared whether it was day or night, or whether I was dead or alive, on this old earth of ours.

“And then she died. How? I do not know; I no longer know anything. But one evening she came home wet, for it was raining heavily, and the next day she coughed, and she coughed for about a week, and took to her bed. What happened I do not remember now, but doctors came, wrote, and went away. Medicines were brought, and some women made her drink them. Her hands were hot, her forehead was burning, and her eyes bright and sad. When I spoke to her, she answered me, but I do not remember what she said. I have forgotten everything, everything, everything! She died, and I very well remember her slight, feeble sigh. The nurse said: ‘Ah!’ and I understood, I understood!

“I knew nothing more, nothing. I saw a priest, who said: ‘Your mistress?’ and it seemed to me as if he were insulting her. As she was dead, nobody had the right to say that any longer, and I turned him out. Another came who was very kind and tender, and I shed tears when he spoke to me about her.

Was it a Dream?

“ They consulted me about the funeral, but I do not remember anything that they said, though I recollect the coffin, and the sound of the hammer when they nailed her down in it. Oh! God, God!

“ She was buried! Buried! She! In that hole! Some people came — female friends. I made my escape and ran away. I ran, and then walked through the streets, went home, and the next day started on a journey.

* * * * *

“ Yesterday I returned to Paris, and when I saw my room again — our room, our bed, our furniture, everything that remains of the life of a human being after death — I was seized by such a violent attack of fresh grief, that I felt like opening the window and throwing myself out into the street. I could not remain any longer among these things, between those walls which had inclosed and sheltered her, which retained a thousand atoms of her, of her skin and of her breath in their imperceptible crevices. I took up my hat to make my escape, and just as I reached the door, I passed the large glass in the hall, which she had put there so that she

might look at herself every day from head to foot as she went out, to see if her toilette looked well, and was correct and pretty, from her little boots to her bonnet.

“I stopped short in front of that looking-glass in which she had so often been reflected — so often, so often, that it must have retained her reflection. I was standing there, trembling, with my eyes fixed on the glass — on that flat, profound, empty glass — which had contained her entirely, and had possessed her as much as I, as my passionate looks had. I felt as if I loved that glass. I touched it; it was cold. Oh! the recollection! sorrowful mirror, burning mirror, horrible mirror, to make men suffer such torments! Happy is the man whose heart forgets everything that it has contained, everything that has passed before it, everything that has looked at itself in it, or has been reflected in its affection, in its love! How I suffer!

“I went out without knowing it, without wishing it, and toward the cemetery. I found her simple grave, a white marble cross, with these few words:

“‘She loved, was loved, and died.’

Was it a Dream?

“She is there, below, decayed! How horrible! I sobbed with my forehead on the ground and I stopped there for a long time, a long time. Then I saw that it was getting dark, and a strange, mad wish, the wish of a despairing lover, seized me. I wished to pass the night, the last night, in weeping on her grave. But I should be seen and driven out. How was I to manage? I was cunning, and got up and began to roam about in that city of the dead. I walked and walked. How small this city is, in comparison with the other, the city in which we live. And yet, how much more numerous the dead are than the living. We want high houses, wide streets and much room for the four generations who see the daylight at the same time, drink water from the spring, and wine from the vines, and eat bread from the plains.

“And for all the generations of the dead, for all that ladder of humanity that has descended to us here, there is scarcely anything, scarcely anything! The earth takes them back, and oblivion effaces them. Adieu!

“At the end of the cemetery, I suddenly perceived that I was in its oldest part, where those who had been dead a long time are

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mingling with the soil, where the crosses themselves are decayed, where possibly newcomers will be put to-morrow. It is full of untended roses, of strong and dark cypress-trees, a sad and beautiful garden, nourished on human flesh.

“ I was alone, perfectly alone. So I crouched in a green tree and hid myself there completely amid the thick and somber branches. I waited, clinging to the stem, as a shipwrecked man clings to a plank.

“ When it was quite dark, I left my refuge and began to walk softly, slowly, inaudibly, through that ground full of dead people. I wandered about for a long time, but could not find her tomb again. I went on with extended arms, knocking against the tombs with my hands, my feet, my knees, my chest, even with my head, without being able to find her. I groped about like a blind man finding his way; I felt the stones, the crosses, the iron railings, the metal wreaths, and the wreaths of faded flowers! I read the names with my fingers, by passing them over the letters. What a night! What a night! I could not find her again!

“ There was no moon! What a night! I

Was it a Dream?

was frightened, horribly frightened in these narrow paths, between two rows of graves. Graves! graves! graves! nothing but graves! On my right, on my left, in front of me, around me, everywhere there were graves! I sat down on one of them, for I could not walk any longer, my knees were so weak. I could hear my heart beat! And I heard something else as well. What? A confused, nameless noise. Was the noise in my head, in the impenetrable night, or beneath the mysterious earth, the earth sown with human corpses? I looked all around me, but I cannot say how long I remained there; I was paralyzed with terror, cold with fright, ready to shout out, ready to die.

“Suddenly, it seemed to me that the slab of marble on which I was sitting was moving. Certainly it was moving, as if it were being raised. With a bound, I sprang upon the neighboring tomb, and I saw, yes, I distinctly saw the stone which I had just quitted rise upright. Then the dead person appeared, a naked skeleton, pushing the stone back with its bent back. I saw it quite clearly, although the night was so dark. On the cross I could read:

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“‘Here lies Jacques Olivant, who died at the age of fifty-one. He loved his family, was kind and honorable, and died in the grace of the Lord.’

“The dead man also read what was inscribed on his tombstone; then he picked up a stone off the path, a little, pointed stone, and began to scrape the letters carefully. He slowly effaced them, and with the hollows of his eyes he looked at the places where they had been engraved. Then, with the tip of the bone that had been his forefinger, he wrote in luminous letters, like those lines which boys trace on walls with the tip of a lucifer match:

“‘Here reposes Jacques Olivant, who died at the age of fifty-one. He hastened his father’s death by his unkindness, as he wished to inherit his fortune; he tortured his wife, tormented his children, deceived his neighbors, robbed everyone he could, and died wretched.’

“When he had finished writing, the dead man stood motionless, looking at his work. On turning round I saw that all the graves were open, that all the dead bodies had emerged from them, and that all had effaced the lies inscribed on the gravestones by their relations, substituting the truth instead. And I saw that all had been the tormentors of their neighbors — malicious, dishonest, hypo-

Was it a Dream?

crites, liars, rogues, calumniators, envious; that they had stolen, deceived, performed every disgraceful, every abominable action, these good fathers, these faithful wives, these devoted sons, these chaste daughters, these honest tradesmen, these men and women who were called irreproachable. They were all writing at the same time, on the threshold of their eternal abode, the truth, the terrible and the holy truth of which everybody was ignorant, or pretended to be ignorant, while they were alive.

“I thought that she also must have written something on her tombstone, and now running without any fear among the half-open coffins, among the corpses and skeletons, I went toward her, sure that I should find her immediately. I recognized her at once, without seeing her face, which was covered by the winding-sheet, and on the marble cross, where shortly before I had read:

“‘She loved, was loved, and died.’

I now saw:

“‘Having gone out in the rain one day, in order to deceive her lover, she caught cold and died.’

* * * * *

“It appears that they found me at day-break, lying on the grave unconscious.”

IN THE MOONLIGHT



WELL-MERITED was the name, "soldier of God," by the Abbé Marignan. He was a tall, thin priest, fanatical to a degree, but just, and of an exalted soul. All his beliefs were fixed, with never a

waver. He thought that he understood God thoroughly, that he penetrated His designs, His wishes, His intentions.

Striding up and down the garden walk of his little country parsonage, sometimes a question rose in his mind: "Why did God make that?" Then in his thoughts, putting himself in God's place, he searched obstinately, and nearly always was satisfied that he found the reason. He was not the man to murmur in transports of pious humility, "O Lord, thy ways are past finding out!" What he said was: "I am the servant of God; I ought

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to know the reason of what he does, or to divine it if I do not."

Everything in nature seemed to him created with an absolute and admirable logic. The "wherefore" and the "because" were always balanced. The dawns were made to rejoice you on waking, the days to ripen the harvests, the rains to water them, the evenings to prepare for sleeping, and the nights dark for sleep.

The four seasons corresponded perfectly to all the needs of agriculture; and to him the suspicion could never have come that nature has no intention, and that all which lives has accustomed itself, on the contrary, to the hard conditions of different periods, of climates, and of matter.

But he hated women; he hated them unconsciously, and despised them by instinct. He often repeated the words of Christ, "Woman, what have I to do with thee?" and he would add, "One would almost say that God himself was ill pleased with that particular work of his hands." Woman for him was indeed the "child twelve times unclean" of whom the poet speaks. She was the temptress who had ensnared the first man, and who still

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continued her damnable work; she was the being who is feeble, dangerous, mysteriously troublous. And even more than her poisonous beauty, he hated her loving soul.

He had often felt women's tenderness attack him, and though he knew himself to be unassailable, he grew exasperated at this need of loving which quivers continually in their hearts.

To his mind, God had only created woman to tempt man and to test him. Man should not approach her without those precautions for defense which he would take, and the fears he would cherish, near an ambush. Woman, indeed, was just like a trap, with her arms extended and her lips open toward man.

He had toleration only for nuns, rendered harmless by their vow; but he treated them harshly notwithstanding, because, ever at the bottom of their chained-up hearts, their chastened hearts, he perceived the eternal tenderness that constantly went out even to him, although he was a priest.

He had a niece who lived with her mother in a little house near by. He was bent on making her a sister of charity. She was pretty and hare-brained, and a great tease. When

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the abbé sermonized, she laughed; when he was angry at her, she kissed him vehemently, pressing him to her heart, while he would seek involuntarily to free himself from her embrace. Notwithstanding, it made him taste a certain sweet joy, awaking deep within him that sensation of fatherhood which slumbers in every man.

Often he talked to her of God, of his God, walking beside her along the footpaths through the fields. She hardly listened, but looked at the sky, the grass, the flowers, with a joy of living which could be seen in her eyes. Sometimes she rushed forward to catch some flying creature, and bringing it back would cry: "Look, my uncle, how pretty it is; I should like to kiss it." And this necessity to "kiss flies" or sweet flowers worried, irritated, and revolted the priest, who saw, even in that, the ineradicable tenderness which ever springs in the hearts of women.

One day the sacristan's wife, who kept house for the Abbé Marignan, told him, very cautiously, that his niece had a lover!

He experienced a dreadful emotion, and he stood choking, with the soap all over his face, in the act of shaving.

In the Moonlight

When he found himself able to think and speak once more, he cried: "It is not true; you are lying, Melanie!"

But the peasant woman put her hand on her heart: "May our Lord judge me if I am lying, Monsieur le Curé. I tell you she goes to him every evening as soon as your sister is in bed. They meet each other beside the river. You have only to go there between ten o'clock and midnight, and see for yourself."

He ceased scratching his chin and commenced to pace the room quickly, as he always did in his hours of gravest thought. When he tried to begin his shaving again, he cut himself three times from nose to ear.

All day long he remained silent, swollen with anger and with rage. To his priestly zeal against the mighty power of love was added the moral indignation of a father, of a teacher, of a keeper of souls, who has been deceived, robbed, played with by a child. He felt the egotistical sorrow that parents feel when their daughter announces that she has chosen a husband without them and in spite of their advice.

After his dinner, he tried to read a little, but he could not attune himself to it; and he

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grew angrier and angrier. When it struck ten, he took his cane, a formidable oaken club which he always carried when he had to go out at night to visit the sick. Smilingly he regarded the enormous cudgel, holding it in his solid, countryman's fist and cutting threatening circles with it in the air. Then, suddenly, he raised it, and grinding his teeth, he brought it down upon a chair, the back of which, split in two, fell heavily to the ground.

He opened his door to go out; but he stopped upon the threshold, surprised by such a splendor of moonlight as you seldom see.

Endowed as he was with an exalted spirit, such a spirit as must have belonged to those dreamer-poets, the Fathers of the Church, he felt himself suddenly softened and moved by the grand and serene beauty of the pale-faced night.

In his little garden, bathed in the soft brilliance, his fruit-trees, all a-row, were outlining in shadow upon the walk their slender limbs of wood scarce clothed with green; while the giant honeysuckle climbing on the house wall exhaled delicious, sugared breaths, which hovered through the warm, clear night like a perfumed soul.

In the Moonlight

He began to breathe deep, drinking the air as drunkards drink their wine, and walking slowly, ravished, surprised, and almost oblivious of his niece.

As he stepped into the open country he stopped to contemplate the whole plain, inundated by this caressing radiance, and drowned in the tender and languishing charm of the serene night. In chorus the frogs threw into space their short, metallic notes, and with the seduction of the moonlight, distant nightingales mingled that fitful music of theirs which brings no thoughts but dreams, a light and vibrant melody which seems attuned to kisses.

The abbé continued his walk, his courage failing, he knew not why. He felt, as it were, enfeebled, and suddenly exhausted; he had a great desire to sit down, to pause right there and praise God in all His works.

Below him, following the bends of the little river, wound a great line of poplars. On and about the banks, wrapping all the tortuous watercourse in a kind of light, transparent wadding, hung suspended a fine mist, a white vapor, which the moon-rays crossed, and silvered, and caused to gleam.

The priest paused yet again, penetrated to

the depths of his soul by a strong and growing emotion. And a doubt, a vague uneasiness, seized on him; he felt that one of those questions he sometimes put to himself was now being born.

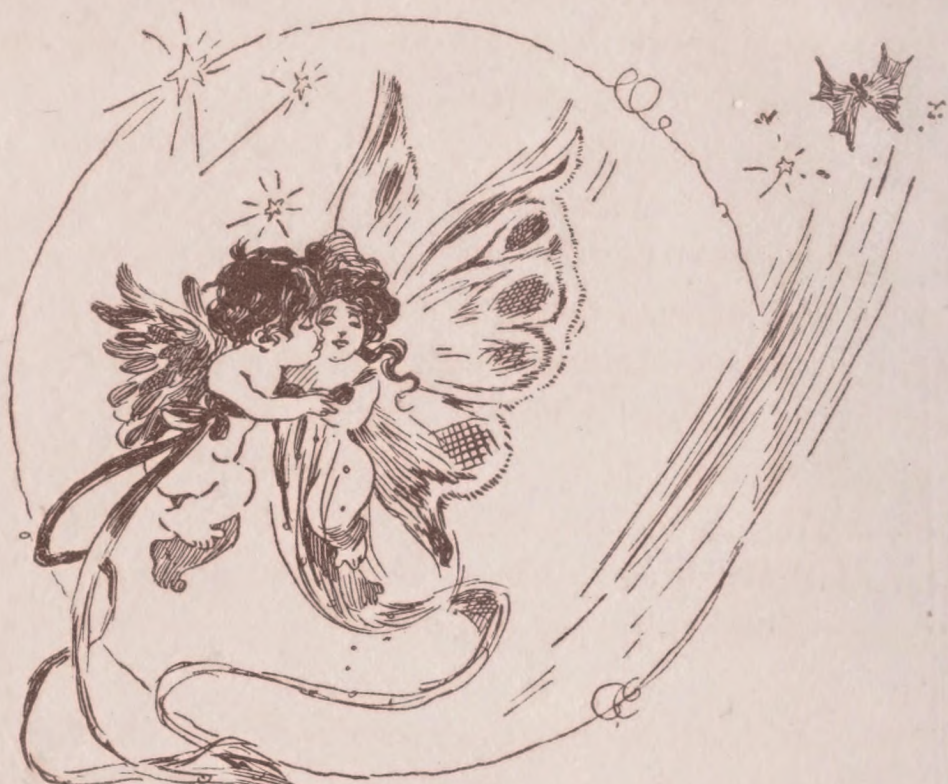
Why had God done this? Since the night is destined for sleep, for unconsciousness, for repose, for forgetfulness of everything, why, then, make it more charming than the day, sweeter than dawns and sunsets? And this slow, seductive star, more poetical than the sun, and so discreet that it seems designed to light up things too delicate, too mysterious, for the great luminary, — why had it come to brighten all the shades? Why did not the sweetest of all songsters go to rest like the others? Why set himself to singing in the vaguely troubling dark? Why this half-veil over the world? Why these quiverings of the heart, this emotion of the soul, this languor of the body? Why this display of seductions which mankind never sees, since night brings sleep? For whom was this sublime spectacle intended, this flood of poetry poured from heaven to earth? The abbé did not understand it at all.

But then, down there along the edge of the





The man... had his arms
about his mistress's neck;
From time to time
he kissed her



The man...had his arm
about his mistress's neck;
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he kissed her

In the Moonlight

pasture, appeared two shadows walking side by side under the arched roof of the trees all soaked in glittering mist.

The man was the taller, and had his arm about his mistress's neck; from time to time he kissed her on the forehead. They animated the lifeless landscape which enveloped them, a divine frame made, as it were, expressly for them. They seemed, these two, a single being, the being for whom this calm and silent night was destined; and they approached the priest like a living answer, the answer vouchsafed by his Master to his question.

He stood stock-still, overwhelmed, and with a beating heart. He likened it to some Bible story, such as the loves of Ruth and Boaz, the accomplishment of the will of the Lord in one of those great scenes talked of in holy writ. Through his head ran the versicles of the Song of Songs, the ardent cries, the calls of the body, all the passionate poetry of that poem which burns with tenderness and love. And he said to himself, "God perhaps has made such nights as this to clothe with his ideals the loves of men."

He withdrew before the couple, who went

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on arm in arm. It was really his niece; and now he asked himself if he had not been about to disobey God. For does not God indeed permit love, since He surrounds it visibly with splendor such as this?

And he fled, in amaze, almost ashamed, as if he had penetrated into a temple where he had no right to enter.



THE OLD MAID



OUNT EUSTACHE D'ETCH-
EGORRY'S solitary coun-
try house had the appear-
ance of a poor man's home,
where people do not have
enough to eat every day in
the week, where the bottles

are more frequently filled at the pump than in the cellar, and where they wait until it is quite dark before lighting the candles.

It was an old and miserable building; the walls were crumbling to pieces, the grated iron gates were eaten away by rust, the holes in the broken windows had been mended with old newspapers, but the ancestral portraits which hung against the walls showed that it was no tiller of the soil, nor miserable back-bent laborer whose strength had gradually worn out, that lived there. Great, knotty elm-trees sheltered it, as with a tall, green

screen, and a large garden, full of wild rose-trees, of straggling plants, and of sickly looking vegetables, which sprang up half withered from the sandy soil, stretched down to the bank of the river.

From the house, one could hear the monotonous sound of the water, which at one time rushed yellow and impetuous toward the sea, and then again flowed back, as if driven by some invisible force, toward the town, which could be seen in the distance, with its pointed spires, its ramparts, its ships at anchor by the side of the quay, and its citadel built on the top of a hill.

A strong smell of the sea came from the offing, mingled with the smell of pine logs, and of the large nets with great pieces of seaweed clinging to them, which were drying in the sun.

Why had Monsieur d'Etchegorry, who did not like the country, who was of a sociable rather than of a solitary nature, for he never walked alone, but associated with the retired officers who lived there, and frequently played game after game of piquet at the café, when he was in town — why had he buried himself in such a solitary place, by the side of a dusty

The Old Maid

road at Boucau, a village close to the town, where on Sundays the soldiers took off their tunics, and sat in their shirt-sleeves in the public-houses, drinking the thin wine of the country, and teasing the girls?

What secret reason he had for selling the mansion which he had possessed at Bayonne, close to the bishop's palace, and condemning his daughter, a girl of nineteen, to such a dull, listless, solitary life, counting the minutes far from everybody, as if she had been a nun, no one knew. Most people said that he had lost immense sums in gambling, and had wasted his fortune and ruined his credit in doubtful speculations. They wondered whether he still regretted the tender, sweet woman whom he had lost, who died one evening, after years of suffering, like a church lamp whose oil has been consumed to the last drop. Was he seeking for perfect oblivion, for that Nirvana in nature, in which a man becomes enervated and enveloped as with a moist, warm cloth? How could he be satisfied with such an existence — with the bad cooking, and the careless, untidy ways of a charwoman, and with the shabby clothes, discolored by use, that he had to wear?

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His numerous relations had been anxious about it at first, had tried to cure him of his apparent hypochondria, and to persuade him to do something. But as he was obstinate, avoided them, rejected their friendly offers with arrogance and self-sufficiency, even his brothers had abandoned and almost renounced him. All their affection had been transferred to the poor child who shared his solitude, and endured all her wretchedness with the resignation of a saint. Thanks to them, she had a few gleams of pleasure in her exile, was not dressed like a beggar girl, but received invitations, and appeared here and there at some ball, concert, or tennis party. The girl was extremely grateful to them for it all, although she would much have preferred that nobody should have held out a helping hand to her, but have left her to her dull life, without any day dreams or homesickness, so that she might grow used to her lot, and day by day lose all that remained to her of her pride of race and of her youth.

With her sensitive and proud mind, she felt that she was not treated exactly as others were in society, that people showed her either too much pity or too much indifference, that

The Old Maid

they knew all about her home life of undeserved poverty, and that in the folds of her muslin dress they could smell the mustiness of her dwelling. If she was animated, or buoyed up with secret hopes in her heart, if there was a smile on her lips, and light in her eyes when she went out at the gate, and the horses carried her off to town at a rapid trot, she was all the more low-spirited and tearful when she returned home. She used to shut herself up in her room and find fault with her destiny, declaring to herself that she would imitate her father, show relatives and friends politely out, with a passive and resigned gesture, and make herself so unpleasant and embarrassing that they would grow tired of it in the end, would leave long intervals between their visits, and finally would not come to see her at all, but would turn away from her, as from some hospital where incurable patients were dying.

Nevertheless, the older the count grew, the more the supplies in the small country house diminished, and the more painful and harder existence became. If a morsel of bread was left uneaten on the table, if an unexpected dish was served up at table, if she put a

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piece of ribbon into her hair, he used to heap violent, spiteful reproaches on her, torrents of rage and vituperation and violent threats, like those of a madman who is tormented by some fixed idea. Monsieur d'Etchegorry had dismissed the servant and engaged a char-woman, whom he intended to pay merely by small sums on account, and he used to go to market with a basket on his arm.

He locked up every morsel of food, used to count the lumps of sugar and charcoal, and bolted himself in all day long in a room that was larger than the rest, which for a long time had served as a drawing-room. At times he would be rather more gentle, as if he were troubled by vague thoughts, and used to say to his daughter, in an agonized voice, and trembling all over: "You will never ask me for any accounts, will you? You will never demand your mother's fortune?"

She always gave him the required promise, did not worry him with any questions, nor give vent to any complaints, and, thinking of her cousins, who would have good dowries, were growing up happily and peacefully amid careful and affectionate surroundings and beautiful old furniture, and were certain to be

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loved and to be married some day, she asked herself why fate was so cruel to some and so kind to others, and what she had done to deserve such disfavor.

Marie-des-Anges d'Etchegorry, without being absolutely pretty, possessed all the charm of her age, and everybody liked her. She was as tall and slim as a lily, with beautiful, fine, soft, fair hair and eyes of a dark, undecided color, which reminded one of those springs in the depths of the forests in which a ray of the sun is but rarely reflected — mirrors which changed now to violet, then to the color of leaves, but most frequently were of a velvety blackness. Her whole being exhaled the freshness of childhood, and an air that could not be described, but which was pleasant, wholesome, and frank.

She lived on through the years, growing up faithful to the man who might have given her his name, honorable, having resisted temptations and snares, worthy of the motto which used to be engraved on the tombs of Roman matrons before the Cæsars: "She spun wool, and stayed at home."

When she was just twenty-one, Marie-des-Anges fell in love, and her beautiful, dark,

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restless eyes for the first time became illuminated with a look of dreamy happiness. For some one seemed to have noticed her; he waltzed with her more frequently than he did with the other girls, spoke to her in a low voice, dangled at her petticoats, and discomposed her so much that she flushed deeply as soon as she heard the sound of his voice.

His name was André de Gèdre; he had just returned from Senegal, where, after several months of daily fighting in the desert, he had won his sub-lieutenant's epaulets.

With his thin, sunburnt, yellow face, looking awkward in his tight coat, in which his broad shoulders could not expand themselves comfortably, and in which his arms, accustomed to cut right and left, were cramped in tight sleeves, he looked like one of those pirates of old, who used to scour the seas, pillaging, killing, hanging their prisoners to the yard-arms, and ready to engage a whole fleet, and who returned to port laden with booty, and occasionally with waifs and strays picked up at sea.

He belonged to a race of buccaneers or of heroes, according to the breeze which swelled his sails and carried him north or south.

The Old Maid

Over head and ears in debt, reduced to discounting doubtful legacies, to gambling at casinos, and to mortgaging the few acres of land that he still owned at much below their value, he nevertheless managed to make a pretty good figure in his hand-to-mouth existence. He never gave in, never showed the blows that he had received, and waited for the last struggle in a state of blissful inactivity, while he sought for renewed strength and philosophy from the caressing lips of women.

Marie-des-Anges seemed to him to be a toy which he could play with as he liked. She had the flavor of unripe fruit; left to herself, and sentimental as she was, she would only offer a very brief resistance to his attacks, would soon yield to his will, and when he was tired of her and threw her off, she would bow to the inevitable and would not worry him with violent scenes, or stand in his way with threats on her lips. And so he was kind, and used to wheedle her, and by degrees enveloped her in the meshes of a net which continually hemmed her in closer and closer. He gained entire possession of her heart and confidence, without expressing any wish or

making any promises, and managed so to establish his influence over her, that she did nothing but what he wished.

Long before Monsieur de Gèdre had addressed any passionate words to her, or any of those avowals which immediately introduce warmth and danger into a flirtation, Marie-des-Anges had betrayed herself with the candor of a little girl, who does not think she is doing any wrong, and cannot hide what she thinks, what she is dreaming about, and the tenderness which lies hidden at the bottom of her heart. She no longer felt that horror of life which had formerly tortured her. She no longer felt herself alone, as she had felt formerly — so alone, so lost, even among her own people, that everything had become indifferent to her.

It was very pleasant and soothing to love and to think that she was loved, to have a furtive and secret understanding with another heart, to imagine that he was thinking of her at the same time that she was thinking of him, to shelter herself timidly under his protection, to feel more unhappy each time she left him, and to experience greater happiness every time they met.

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She wrote him long letters, which she did not venture to send him when they were written, for she was timid and feared that he would make fun of them. But she sang the whole day through like a lark that is intoxicated with the sun, so that Monsieur d'Etchegorry scarcely recognized her any longer.

Soon they made appointments together in some secluded spot, meeting for a few minutes in the aisles of the cathedral and behind the ramparts, or on the promenade of the Allées Marínés, which was always dark, on account of the dense foliage.

And at last, one evening in June, when the sky was so studded with stars that it might have been taken for the triumphal route of some sovereign, strewn with precious stones and rare flowers, Monsieur de Gèdre went into the large neglected garden.

Marie-des-Anges was waiting for him in a somber walk, with witch-elms on either side, listening for the least noise, looking at the closed windows of the house, and nearly fainting, as much from fear as from happiness. They spoke in a low voice. She was close to him; he must have heard the beating of her heart, into which he had cast the first seeds

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of love, and he put his arms round her and clasped her gently, as if she had been some little bird that he was afraid of hurting, but which he did not wish to escape.

She no longer knew what she was doing, but was in a state of entire, intense, supreme happiness. She shivered, and yet something burning seemed to permeate her whole being under her skin, from the nape of her neck to her feet, like a stream of flaming spirit. She would not have had the strength to disengage herself, or to take a step forward, so she leaned her head instinctively and very tenderly against André's shoulder. He kissed her hair, touched her forehead with his lips, and at last put them against hers. The girl felt as if she were going to die and remained inert and motionless, with her eyes full of tears.

He came nearly every evening for two months. She had not the courage to repel him or to speak to him seriously of the future, and could not understand why he had not yet asked her father for her hand, and had not fulfilled his former promises, until one Sunday, as she was coming from High Mass, walking on before her cousins, Marie-des-AnGES heard the following words, from a

The Old Maid

group in which André was standing. He was the speaker:

“Oh! no,” he said, “you are altogether mistaken; I should never do anything so foolish. One does not marry a girl without a half-penny—one takes her for one’s mistress.”

The unhappy girl mastered her feelings, went down the steps of the porch quite steadily but feeling utterly crushed, as if by the news of some terrible disaster, and joined the servant, who was waiting for her, to accompany her back to Boucau. The effect of what she had heard was to give her a serious illness, and for some time she hovered between life and death, consumed and wasted by a violent fever. When, after a fortnight’s suffering, she grew convalescent, and looked at herself in the glass, she recoiled, as if she had been face to face with an apparition, for there was nothing left of her former self.

Her eyes were dull, her cheeks pale and hollow, and there were white streaks in her silky, light hair. Why had she not succumbed to her illness? Why had destiny reserved her for such a trial, and increased the unhappiness of her lot with disappointed hopes? But when that rebellious feeling was over,

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she accepted her cross, fell into a state of ardent devotion, became crystallized in the torpor of old-womanhood, tried with all her might to rid her memory of any recollections that had become incrustated in it, and to put a thick black veil between herself and the past.

She never walked in the garden now, never went to Bayonne, and would have liked to have choked and beaten herself when, in spite of her efforts and of her will, she remembered her lost happiness, and when some sensual feeling and a longing for past pleasures agitated her body afresh.

That lasted for four years, which finished and altogether destroyed her good looks. She had gained the figure and the appearance of an old maid, when her father suddenly died, just as he was going to sit down to dinner. When the lawyer, who was summoned immediately, had ransacked the cupboards and drawers, he discovered a mass of securities, of banknotes, and of gold, which Count d'Etchegorry, who was eaten up with avarice, had amassed eagerly and hidden away. It was found that Mademoiselle Marie-des-Anges, who was his sole heiress, possessed an income of fifty thousand francs.

The Old Maid

She received the news without any emotion, for of what use was such a fortune to her now, and what should she do with it? Her eyes, alas! had been too much opened by all the tears that had fallen from them for her to delude herself with visionary hopes, and her heart had been too cruelly wounded to warm itself by lying illusions. She was seized by melancholy when she thought that in future she would be coveted, she who had been kept at arm's length as if she had been a leper; that men would come after her money with odious impatience; that now that she was worn out and ugly, tired of everything and everybody, she would most certainly have plenty of suitors to refuse, and that perhaps he would come back to her, attracted by that amount of money, like a hawk hovering over its prey, — would try to rekindle the dead cinders, to revive some spark in them, and to obtain pardon for his cowardice.

Oh! with what bitter pleasure she could have thrown those thousands into the road to ragged beggars, or scattered them about like manna to all who were suffering and dying of hunger, and who had neither roof nor hearth! She naturally soon became the

target at which everyone aimed, the goal for which all those who had formerly disdained her most now eagerly tried.

It was not long before Monsieur de Gèdre was in the ranks of her suitors, as she had foreseen, and caused her that last heart-burning of seeing him humbled, kneeling at her feet, acting a comedy, trying every means to overcome her resistance, and to regain possession of that heart, now closed against him, after having been entirely his, in all its adorable virginity.

And Marie-des-Anges had loved him so deeply that his letters, in which he recalled the past, and stirred up all the recollections of their love, their kisses, and their dreams, softened her in spite of herself, and came across her profound, incurable sadness, like a passing light, the reflection of a bonfire, which, from a distance, illumines a prison cell for a moment.

He was poor himself, and had not wished, so he said, to drag her into his life of privation and shifts. She thought to herself that perhaps he had been right; and thus insensibly, like an indulgent mother or elder sister, who wishes to close her eyes and her ears

The Old Maid

against everything, to forgive again and forgive always, she excused him. She tried to remember nothing but those months of tenderness and of ecstasy, those months of happiness, and that he had been the first, the only man, who in the course of her unhappy wasted life had given her a moment's peace, a day dream of bliss, and had made her happy, youthful and loving.

He had been charitable toward her, and she would be so a hundredfold toward him. So she grew happy again, when she said to herself that she would be his benefactress, that even with his hard heart he could not, without some feelings of gratitude and emotion, accept the sacrifice from a woman, who, like so many others, might have returned him evil for evil, but who preferred to be kind and maternal, after having been in love with him.

And that resolution transfigured her, restored to her, temporarily, something of her vanished youth. A poor, heroic saint among saints, she took refuge in a Carmelite convent, so as to escape from this returning temptation, and bequeathed everything of which she could lawfully dispose to Monsieur de Gèdre.

THE LANCER'S WIFE



It was after Bourbaki's defeat in the east of France. The army, broken up, decimated and worn out, had been obliged to retreat into Switzerland, after that terrible campaign. It was only the short duration of the struggle that saved a hundred and fifty thousand men from certain death. Hunger, the terrible cold, and forced marches in the snow without boots, over bad mountainous roads, had caused the *francs-tireurs* especially the greatest suffering, for we were without tents and almost without food, always in front when we were marching toward Belfort, and in the rear when returning by the Jura. Of our brigade, that had numbered twelve hundred men on the first of January, there remained only twenty-two pale, thin, ragged wretches when at length we succeeded in reaching Swiss territory.

There we were safe and could rest. Everybody knows what sympathy was shown to the unfortunate French army, and how well it was cared for. We all gained fresh life, and those who had been rich and happy before the war declared that they had never experienced a greater feeling of comfort than they did then. Just think! We actually had something to eat every day, and could sleep every night.

Meanwhile, the war continued in the east of France, which had been excluded from the armistice. Besançon still kept the enemy in check, and the latter had their revenge by ravaging the Comte Franche. Sometimes we heard that they had approached quite close to the frontier, and we saw Swiss troops, who were to form a line of observation between us and the Germans, set out on their march.

But this hurt our pride, and as we regained health and strength the longing for fighting laid hold of us. It was disgraceful and irritating to know that within two or three leagues of us the Germans were victorious and insolent, to feel that we were protected by our captivity, and to feel that on that account we were powerless against them.

The Lancer's Wife

One day, our captain took five or six of us aside, and spoke to us about it, long and earnestly. He was a fine fellow, that captain. He had been a sub-lieutenant in the Zouaves, was tall and thin and as hard as steel, and during the whole campaign had given a great deal of trouble to the Germans. He fretted in inactivity and could not accustom himself to the idea of being a prisoner and of doing nothing.

“Confound it!” he said to us, “does it not pain you to know that there are a lot of uhlands within two hours of us? Does it not almost drive you mad to know that those beggarly wretches are walking about as masters in our mountains, where six determined men might kill a whole troop any day? I cannot endure it any longer, and I must go there.”

“But how can you manage it, Captain?”

“How? It is not very difficult! Just as if we had not done a thing or two within the last six months, and got out of woods that were guarded by men very different from the Swiss. The day that you wish to cross over into France, I will undertake to get you there.”

“That may be; but what shall we do in France without any arms?”

"Without arms? We will get them over yonder, by Jove!"

"You are forgetting the treaty," another soldier said; "we shall run the risk of doing the Swiss an injury, if Manteuffel learns that they have allowed prisoners to return to France."

"Come," said the captain, "those are all poor reasons. I mean to go and kill some Prussians; that is all I care about. If you do not wish to do as I do, well and good; only say so at once. I can quite well go by myself; I do not require anybody's company."

Naturally we all protested, and as it was quite impossible to make the captain alter his mind, we felt obliged to promise to go with him. We liked him too much to leave him in the lurch, since he had never failed us in any extremity; and so the expedition was decided on.

II.

The captain had a plan of his own, a plan he had been cogitating over for some time. A man in that part of the country, whom he knew, was going to lend him a cart, and six

The Lancer's Wife

suits of peasants' clothes. We could hide under some straw at the bottom of the wagon, which would be loaded with Gruyère cheese. This cheese he was supposed to be going to sell in France. The captain told the sentinels that he was taking two friends with him to protect his goods, in case anyone should try to rob him, which did not seem an extraordinary precaution. A Swiss officer seemed to look at the wagon in a knowing manner, but that was in order to impress his soldiers. In a word, neither officers nor men made it out.

"Get on," the captain said to the horses, as he cracked his whip, while our men quietly smoked their pipes. I was half suffocated in my box, which only admitted the air through some holes in front, while at the same time I was nearly frozen, for it was terribly cold.

"Get on," the captain said again, and the wagon loaded with Gruyère cheese entered France.

The Prussian lines were very badly guarded, as the enemy trusted to the watchfulness of the Swiss. The sergeant spoke North German, while our captain spoke the bad German of the "Four Cantons"; so they could not

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understand each other. The sergeant, however, pretended to be very intelligent, and in order to make us believe that he understood us, they allowed us to continue our journey, and after traveling for seven hours, being continually stopped in the same manner, we arrived at a small village of the Jura, in ruins, at nightfall.

What were we going to do? Our only arms were the captain's whip, our uniforms, the peasants' blouses, and our food the Gruyère cheese. Our sole riches consisted in our ammunition, packets of cartridges which we had stowed away inside some of the huge cheeses. We had about a thousand of them, just two hundred each; but then we wanted rifles, and they must be *chassepots*; luckily, however, the captain was a bold man of an inventive mind, and this was the plan that he hit upon:

While three of us remained hidden in a cellar in the abandoned village, he continued his journey as far as Besançon with the empty wagon and one man. The town was invested, but one can always make one's way into a town among the hills by crossing the tableland till within about ten miles of the walls, and then by following paths and ravines on foot.

The Lancer's Wife

They left their wagon at Omans, among the Germans, and escaped out of it at night on foot, so as to gain the heights which border the river Doubs; the next day they entered Besançon, where there were plenty of *chasse-pots*. There were nearly forty thousand of them left in the arsenal, and General Roland, a brave marine, laughed at the captain's daring project, but let him have six rifles and wished him "good luck." There he also found his wife, who had been through all the war with us before the campaign in the east, and who had been prevented only by illness from continuing with Bourbaki's army. She had recovered, however, in spite of the cold, which was growing more and more intense, and in spite of the numberless privations that awaited her, she insisted on accompanying her husband. He was obliged to give way to her, and all three, the captain, his wife, and our comrade, started on their expedition.

Going was nothing in comparison to returning. They were obliged to travel by night, so as to avoid meeting anybody, as the possession of six rifles would have made them liable to suspicion. But in spite of everything, a week after leaving us, the captain

and his "two men" were back with us again. The campaign was about to begin.

III.

The first night of his arrival, the captain began it himself. Under the pretext of examining the country round, he went along the highroad. I must tell you that the little village which served as our fortress was a small collection of poor, badly built houses, which had been deserted long before. It lay on a steep slope, which terminated in a wooded plain. The country people sold wood; they sent it down the ravines, which are called *coulées* locally, and which led down to the plain, and there they stacked it into piles, which were sold thrice a year to the wood merchants. The spot where this market was held was indicated by two small houses by the side of the highroad, which served for public-houses. The captain had gone down there by one of these *coulées*.

He had been gone about half an hour, and we were on the lookout at the top of the ravine, when we heard a shot. The captain had ordered us not to stir, and only to come

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to him when we heard him blow his trumpet. It was made of a goat's horn, and could be heard a league off, but it gave no sound, and in spite of our cruel anxiety we were obliged to wait in silence, with our rifles by our side.

To go down these *coulées* is easy: you need only let yourself glide down; but it is more difficult to get up again. You have to scramble up by catching hold of the hanging branches of the trees, and sometimes on all fours, by sheer strength. A whole mortal hour passed, and still the captain did not come, nothing moved in the brushwood. The captain's wife began to grow impatient; what could he be doing? Why did he not call us? Did the shot that we had heard proceed from an enemy and had he killed or wounded our leader, her husband? They did not know what to think, but I myself fancied that either he was dead or that his enterprise was successful. I was merely anxious and curious to know which.

Suddenly, we heard the sound of his trumpet, and were much surprised that instead of coming from below, as we had expected, it came from the village behind us. What did that mean? It was a mystery to us, but the same idea struck us all, that he had been

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killed, and that the Prussians were blowing the trumpet to draw us into an ambush. We therefore returned to the cottage, keeping a careful lookout, with our fingers on the trigger and hiding under the branches. But his wife, in spite of our entreaties, rushed on, leaping like a tigress. She thought that she had to avenge her husband, and had fixed the bayonet to her rifle. We lost sight of her at the moment that we heard the trumpet again, and a few moments later we heard her calling out to us:

“Come on! come on! he is alive! it is he!”

We hastened on, and saw the captain smoking his pipe at the entrance of the village, but strangely enough he was on horseback.

“Ah!” said he to us, “you see that there is something to be done here. Here I am on horseback already; I knocked over a uhlan yonder, and took his horse; I suppose they were guarding the wood, but it was by drinking and swilling in clover. One of them, the sentry at the door, had not time to see me before I gave him a sugarplum in his stomach, and then, before the others could come out, I jumped on to the horse and was off like a shot. Eight or ten of them followed me, I

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think, but I took the crossroads through the wood; I have got scratched and torn a bit, but here I am. And now, my good fellows, attention, and take care! Those brigands will not rest until they have caught us, and we must receive them with rifle bullets. Come along; let us take up our posts!”

We set out. One of us took up his position a good way from the village of the crossroads; I was posted at the entrance of the main street, where the road from the level country enters the village, while the two others, with the captain and his wife, took up positions in the middle of the village, near the church, whose tower served for an observatory and citadel.

We had not been in our places long before we heard a shot followed by another; then two, then three. The first was evidently a *chassepot*, — one recognized it by the sharp report, which sounds like the crack of a whip, — while the other three came from the lancers' carbines.

The captain was furious. He had given orders to the outpost to let the enemy pass, and merely to follow them at a distance if they marched toward the village, and to join

me when they had gone well between the houses. Then they were to appear suddenly, take the patrol between two fires, and not allow a single man to escape, for posted as we were, the six of us could have hemmed in ten Prussians, if needful.

“That confounded Piédelot has roused them,” the captain said, “and they will not venture to come on blindfold any longer. And then I am quite sure that he has managed to get wounded himself somehow or other, for we hear nothing of him. It serves him right; why did he not obey orders?” And then, after a moment, he grumbled in his beard: “After all, I am sorry for the poor fellow; he is so brave and shoots so well!”

The captain was right in his conjectures. We waited until evening, without seeing the uhlans; they had retreated after the first attack, but unfortunately we had not seen Piédelot either. Was he dead or a prisoner? When night came the captain proposed that we should go out and look for him, and so all three of us started. At the crossroads we found a broken rifle and some blood, while the ground was trampled down. But we did not find either a wounded man or a dead

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body, although we searched every thicket. At midnight we returned without having discovered anything of our unfortunate comrade.

"It is very strange," the captain growled. "They must have killed him and thrown him into the bushes somewhere; they cannot possibly have taken him prisoner, as he would have called out for help. I cannot understand it all." Just as he said that, bright red flames shot up in the direction of the inn on the road, which illuminated the sky.

"Scoundrels! cowards!" shouted the captain. "I will bet that they have set fire to the two houses in the market-place, in order to have their revenge, and then they will scuttle off without saying a word. They will be satisfied with having killed a man and setting fire to two houses. All right. It shall not pass over like that. We must go for them; they will not like to leave their illuminations in order to fight."

"It would be a great stroke of luck if we could set Piédelot free at the same time," said some one.

All five of us set off, full of rage and hope. In twenty minutes we had got to the bottom of the *coulée*, and had not yet seen anyone

when within a hundred yards of the inn. The fire was behind the house, and so all that we saw of it was the reflection above the roof. However, we were walking rather slowly, as if we were afraid of a trap, when suddenly we heard Piédelot's well-known voice. It had a strange sound, however, for it was at the same time dull and vibrant, stifled and clear, as if he was calling out as loud as he could with a gag in his mouth. He seemed to be hoarse and panting, and the unlucky fellow kept exclaiming: "Help! Help!"

We sent all thoughts of prudence to the devil and in two bounds were at the back of the inn, where a terrible sight met our eyes.

IV.

Piédelot was being burned alive. He was writhing in the middle of a heap of fagots, against a stake to which they had fastened him, and the flames were licking him with their sharp tongues. When he saw us, his tongue seemed to stick in his throat, he drooped his head, and seemed as if he were going to die. It was only the affair of a moment to upset the burning pile, to scatter the

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embers, and to cut the ropes that fastened him.

Poor fellow! In what a terrible state we found him. The evening before he had had his left arm broken, and it seemed as if he had been badly beaten since then, for his whole body was covered with wounds, bruises and blood. The flames had also begun their work on him, and he had two large burns, one on his loins, and the other on his right thigh, and his beard and his hair were scorched. Poor Piédelot!

Nobody knows the terrible rage we felt at this sight! We would have rushed headlong at a hundred thousand Prussians. Our thirst for vengeance was intense; but the cowards had run away, leaving their crime behind them. Where could we find them now? Meanwhile, however, the captain's wife was looking after Piédelot, and dressing his wounds as best she could, while the captain himself shook hands with him excitedly. In a few minutes he came to himself.

"Good morning, Captain, good morning, all of you," he said. "Ah! the scoundrels, the wretches! Why, twenty of them came to surprise us."

"Twenty, do you say?"

"Yes, there was a whole band of them, and that is why I disobeyed orders, Captain, and fired on them, for they would have killed you all. So I preferred to stop them. That frightened them, and they did not venture to go further than the crossroads. They were such cowards. Four of them shot at me at twenty yards, as if I had been a target, and then they slashed me with their swords. My arm was broken, so that I could only use my bayonet with one hand."

"But why did you not call for help?"

"I took good care not to do that, for you would all have come, and you would neither have been able to defend me nor yourselves, being only five against twenty."

"You know that we should not have allowed you to have been taken, poor old fellow."

"I preferred to die by myself, don't you see! I did not want to bring you there, for it would have been a mere ambush."

"Well, we will not talk about it any more. Do you feel rather easier?"

"No, I am suffocating. I know that I cannot live much longer. The brutes! They

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tied me to a tree, and beat me till I was half dead, and then they shook my broken arm, but I did not make a sound. I would rather have bitten my tongue out than have called out before them. Now I can say what I am suffering and shed tears; it does one good. Thank you, my kind friends."

"Poor Piédelot! But we will avenge you, you may be sure!"

"Yes, yes, I want you to do that. Especially, there is a woman among them, who passes as the wife of the lancer whom the captain killed yesterday. She is dressed like a lancer, and it was she who tortured me the most yesterday, and suggested burning me. In fact, it was she who set fire to the wood. Oh! the wretch, the brute! Ah! how I am suffering! My loins, my arms!" and he fell back panting and exhausted, writhing in his terrible agony, while the captain's wife wiped the perspiration from his forehead. We all shed tears of grief and rage, as if we had been children. I will not describe the end to you; he died half an hour later, but before that he told us in which direction the enemy had gone. When he was dead, we gave ourselves time to bury him, and then we set out in pursuit

of them, with our hearts full of fury and hatred.

"We will throw ourselves on the whole Prussian army, if it be needful," the captain said, "but we will avenge Piédelot. We must catch those scoundrels. Let us swear to die, rather than not to find them, and if I am killed first, these are my orders: all the prisoners that you make are to be shot immediately, and as for the lancer's wife, she is to be tortured before she is put to death."

"She must not be shot, because she is a woman," the captain's wife said. "If you survive, I am sure that you would not shoot a woman. Torturing her will be quite sufficient. But if you are killed in this pursuit, I want one thing, and that is to fight with her; I will kill her with my own hands, and the others can do what they like with her if she kills me."

"We will torture her! We will burn her! We will tear her to pieces! Piédelot shall be avenged, an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth!"

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V.

The next morning we unexpectedly fell on an outpost of uhlans four leagues away. Surprised by our sudden attack, they were not able to mount their horses, nor even to defend themselves, and in a few moments we had five prisoners, corresponding to our own number. The captain questioned them, and from their answers we felt certain that they were the same whom we had encountered the previous day. Then a very curious operation took place. One of us was told off to ascertain their sex, and nothing can depict our joy when we discovered what we were seeking among them, the female executioner who had tortured our friend.

The four others were shot on the spot, with their backs toward us and close to the muzzles of our rifles, and then we turned our attention to the woman. What were we going to do with her? I must acknowledge that we were all of us in favor of shooting her. Hatred, and the wish to avenge Piédelot, had extinguished all pity in us, and we had forgotten that we were going to shoot a woman. But

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a woman reminded us of it, the captain's wife; at her entreaties, therefore, we determined to keep her a prisoner. The captain's poor wife was to be severely punished for this act of clemency.

The next day we heard that the armistice had been extended to the eastern part of France, and we had to put an end to our little campaign. Two of us, who belonged to the neighborhood, returned home. So there remained only four of us, all told: the captain, his wife, and two men. We belonged to Besançon, which was still being besieged in spite of the armistice.

"Let us stop here," said the captain. "I cannot believe that the war is going to end like this. The devil take it! Surely there are men still left in France, and now is the time to prove what they are made of. The spring is coming on, and the armistice is only a trap laid for the Prussians. During the time that it lasts, a new army will be formed, and some fine morning we shall fall upon them again. We shall be ready, and we have a hostage—let us remain here."

We fixed our quarters there. It was terribly cold, and we did not go out much, as

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somebody had always to keep the female prisoner in sight.

She was sullen and never spoke save to refer to her husband, whom the captain had killed. She looked at him continually with fierce eyes, and we felt that she was tortured by a wild longing for revenge. That seemed to us to be the most suitable punishment for the terrible torments that she had made Piédelot suffer, for impotent vengeance is such intense pain.

Alas! we who knew how to avenge our comrade ought to have known that this woman would find a way to avenge her husband, and should have been on our guard. It is true that one of us kept watch every night, and that at first we tied her by a long rope to the great oak bench that was fastened to the wall. But, by and by, as she had never tried to escape, in spite of her hatred for us, we relaxed our extreme prudence and allowed her to sleep somewhere else, and without being tied. What had we to fear? She was at the end of the room, a man was on guard at the door, and between her and the sentinel the captain's wife and two other men used to lie. She was alone and unarmed against four, so there could be no danger.

One night when we were asleep, and the captain was on guard, the lancer's wife was lying more quietly in her corner than usual. She had even smiled during the evening for the first time since she had been our prisoner. Suddenly, however, in the middle of the night, we were awakened by a terrible cry. We got up, groping about. Scarcely were we up when we stumbled over a furious couple who were rolling about and fighting on the ground. It was the captain and the lancer's wife. We threw ourselves on to them and separated them in a moment. She was shouting and laughing, and he seemed to have the death rattle. All this took place in the dark. Two of us held her, and when a light was struck, a terrible sight met our eyes. The captain was lying on the floor in a pool of blood, with an enormous wound in his throat, and his sword bayonet, that had been taken from his rifle, was sticking in the red, gaping wound. A few minutes afterward he died, without having been able to utter a word.

His wife did not shed a tear. Her eyes were dry, her throat was contracted, and she looked at the lancer's wife steadfastly, and with a calm ferocity that inspired fear.

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"This woman belongs to me," she said to us suddenly. "You swore to me not a week ago to let me kill her as I chose if she killed my husband, and you must keep your oath. You must fasten her securely to the fireplace, upright against the back of it, and then you can go where you like, but far from here. I will take my revenge on her to myself. Leave the captain's body, and we three, he, she, and I, will remain here."

We obeyed and went away. She promised to write to us to Geneva, as we were returning there.

VI.

Two days later, I received the following letter, dated the day after we had left. It had been written at an inn on the highroad:

"MY FRIEND:

"I am writing to you, according to my promise. For the moment I am at this inn, where I have just handed my prisoner over to a Prussian officer.

"I must tell you, my friend, that this poor woman left two children in Germany. She had followed her husband, whom she adored, as she did not wish him to be exposed to the risks of war by himself, and as her children were with their grandparents. I have learned all this since yesterday, and it has turned my ideas of vengeance into more humane

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feelings. At the very moment when I felt pleasure in insulting this woman, and in threatening her with the most fearful torments—in recalling Piédelot, who had been burned alive, and in threatening her with a similar death, she looked at me coldly, and said:

“‘Why should you reproach me, Frenchwoman? You think that you will do right in avenging your husband’s death, is not that so?’

“‘Yes,’ I replied.

“‘Very well then; in killing him, I did what you are going to do in burning me. I avenged my husband, for your husband killed him.’

“‘Well,’ I replied, ‘as you approve of this vengeance, prepare to endure it.’

“‘I do not fear it.’

“And in fact she did not seem to have lost courage. Her face was calm, and she looked at me without trembling, while I brought wood and dried leaves together, and feverishly threw upon them the powder from some cartridges, to make her funeral pile the more cruel.

“I hesitated in my thoughts of persecution for a moment. But the captain’s body was there, pale and covered with blood, and he seemed to be looking at me with large, glassy eyes, and I applied myself to my work again after kissing his pale lips. Suddenly, however, on raising my head, I saw that she was crying, and I felt rather surprised.

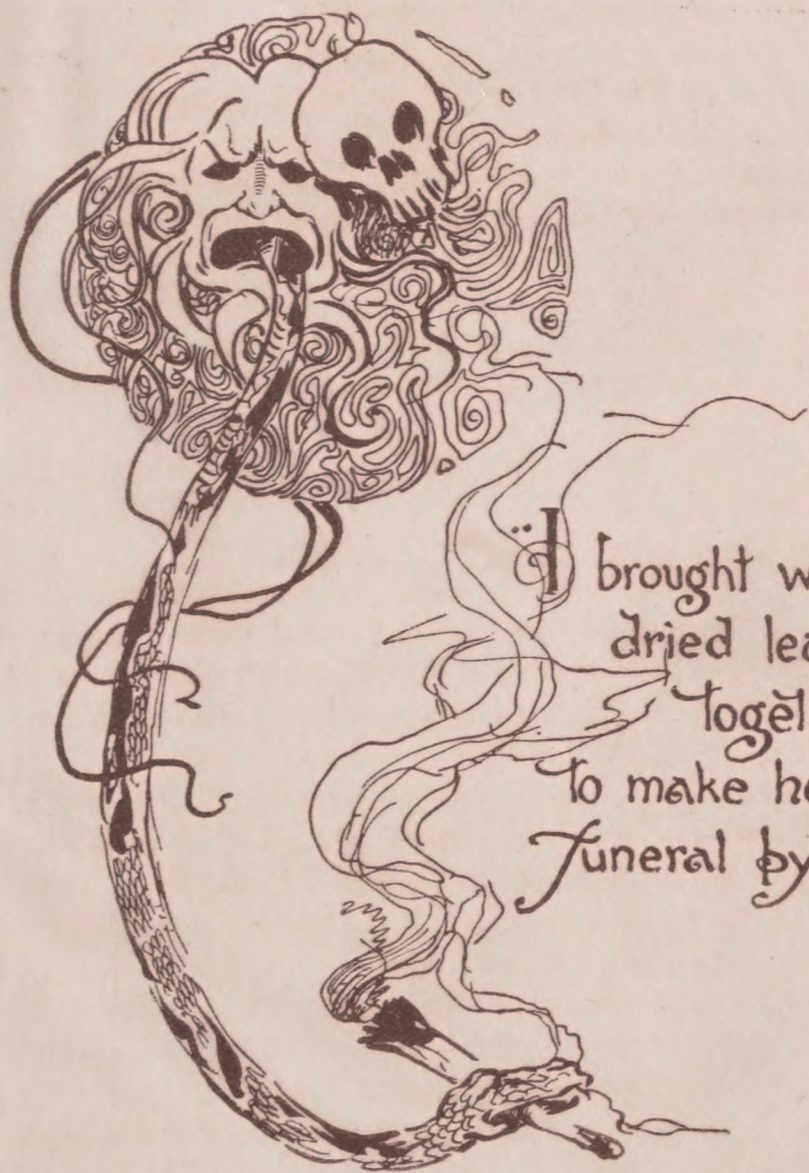
“‘So you are frightened?’ I said to her.

“‘No, but when I saw you kiss your husband, I thought of mine, of all whom I love.’

“She continued to sob, but stopping suddenly she said to me in broken words, and in a low voice:

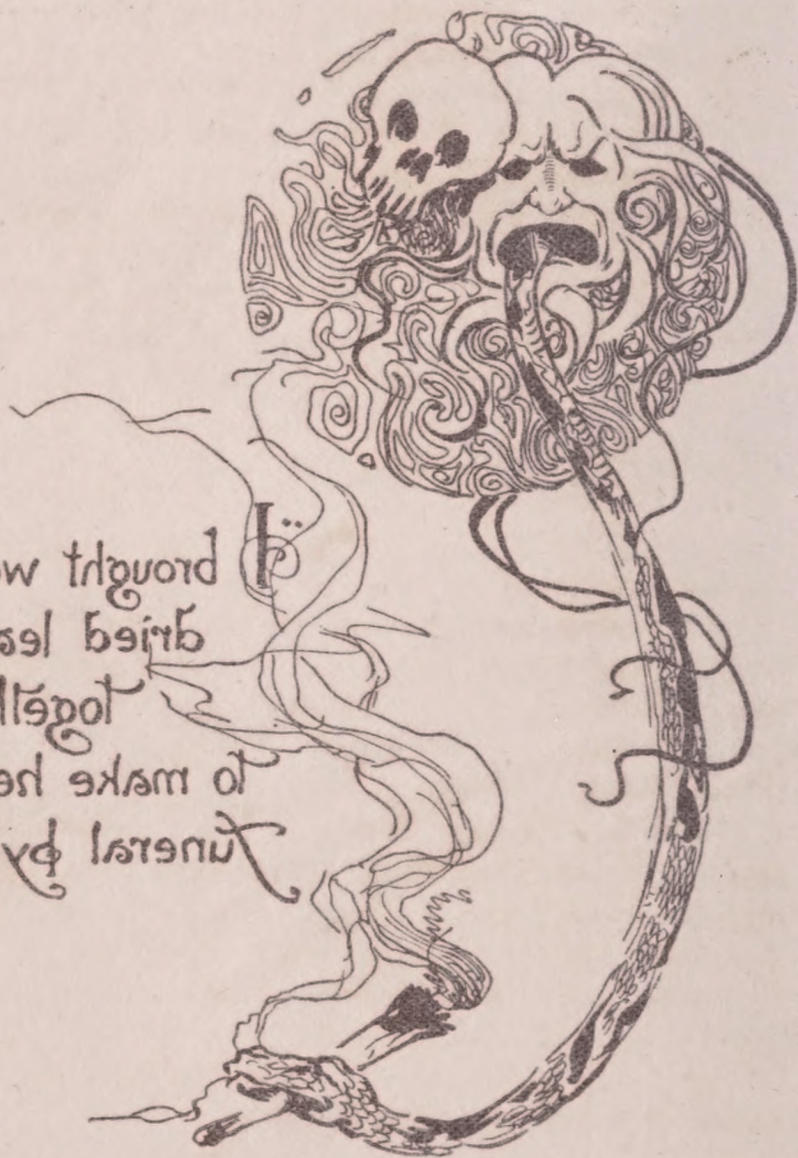
“‘Have you any children?’

“A shiver ran over me, for I guessed that this poor woman had some. She asked me to look in a pocketbook



I brought wood and
dried leaves
together
to make her
funeral pyre.

Funeral pyre
to make her
together
grieved leaves
I brought wood and





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which was in her bosom, and in it I saw two photographs of quite young children, a boy and a girl, with those kind, gentle, chubby faces that German children have. In it there were also two locks of light hair and a letter in a large childish hand, beginning with German words which meant: 'My dear little mother.'

"I could not restrain my tears, my dear friend, and so I untied her, and without venturing to look at the face of my poor, dead husband, who was not to be avenged, I went with her as far as the inn. She is free; I have just left her, and she kissed me with tears. I am going upstairs to my husband; come as soon as possible, my dear friend, to look for our two bodies."

I set off with all speed, and when I arrived there was a Prussian patrol at the cottage. When I asked what it all meant, I was told that there was a captain of *francs-tireurs* and his wife inside, both dead. I gave their names; they saw that I knew them, and I begged to be allowed to undertake their funeral.

"Somebody has already undertaken it," was the reply. "Go in if you wish to, as you knew them. You can settle about their funeral with their friend."

I went in. The captain and his wife were lying side by side on a bed, and were covered by a sheet. I raised it, and saw that the woman had inflicted a wound in her throat similar to that from which her husband had died.

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At the side of the bed there sat, watching and weeping, the woman who had been mentioned to me as their last friend. It was the lancer's wife.



THE SEQUEL TO A DIVORCE



CERTAINLY, although he had been engaged in the most extraordinary, most unlikely, most extravagant, and funniest cases, and had won legal games without a trump in his hand,—although he had worked out the obscure law of divorce, as if it had been a Californian gold mine,—Maître Garulier,* the celebrated, the only Garrulier, could not check a movement of surprise, nor a disheartening shake of the head, nor a smile, when the Countess de Baudemont explained her affairs to him for the first time.

He had just opened his correspondence, and his slender hands, on which he bestowed the greatest attention, buried themselves in a heap of female letters, and one might have

* Title given to advocates in France.

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thought oneself in the confessional of a fashionable preacher, so impregnated was the atmosphere with delicate perfumes.

Immediately — even before she had said a word — with the sharp glance of a practised man of the world, that look which made beautiful Madame de Serpenoise say: “He strips your heart bare!” the lawyer had classed her in the third category. Those who suffer came into his first category, those who love, into the second, and those who are bored, into the third — and she belonged to the latter.

She was a pretty windmill, whose sails turned and flew round, and fretted the blue sky with a delicious shiver of joy, as it were, and had the brain of a bird, in which four correct and healthy ideas cannot exist side by side, and in which all dreams and every kind of folly are engulfed, like a great kaleidoscope.

Incapable of hurting a fly, emotional, charitable, with a feeling of tenderness for the street girl who sells bunches of violets for a penny, for a cab horse which a driver is ill-using, for a melancholy pauper's funeral, when the body, without friends or relations to follow it, is being conveyed to the common grave;

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doing anything that might afford five minutes' amusement, not caring if she made men miserable for the rest of their days, and taking pleasure in kindling passions which consumed men's whole being, looking upon life as too short to be anything else than one uninterrupted round of gaiety and enjoyment, she thought that people might find plenty of time for being serious and reasonable in the evening of life, when they are at the bottom of the hill, and their looking-glasses reveal a wrinkled face, surrounded with white hair.

A thorough-bred Parisian, whom one would follow to the end of the world, like a poodle; a woman whom one adores with the head, the heart, and the senses until one is nearly driven mad, as soon as one has inhaled the delicate perfume that emanates from her dress and hair, or touched her skin, and heard her laugh; a woman for whom one would fight a duel and risk one's life without a thought; for whom a man would remove mountains, and sell his soul to the devil several times over, if the devil were still in the habit of frequenting the places of bad repute on this earth.

She had perhaps come to see this Garrulier, whom she had so often heard mentioned at

five-o'clock teas, so as to be able to describe him to her female friends subsequently in droll phrases, imitating his gestures and the unctuous inflections of his voice, in order, perhaps, to experience some new sensation, or, perhaps, for the sake of dressing like a woman who was going to try for a divorce; and, certainly, the whole effect was perfect. She wore a splendid cloak embroidered with jet — which gave an almost serious effect to her golden hair, to her small slightly turned-up nose, with its quivering nostrils, and to her large eyes, full of enigma and fun — over a dark stuff dress, which fastened at the neck by a sapphire and a diamond pin.

The barrister did not interrupt her, but allowed her to get excited and to chatter, to enumerate her causes for complaint against poor Count de Baudemont, who certainly had no suspicion of his wife's escapade, and who would have been very much surprised if anyone had told him of it at that moment, when he was taking his fencing lesson at the club.

When she had quite finished, he said coolly, as if he were throwing a pail of water on some burning straw:

“ But, Madame, there is not the slightest

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pretext for a divorce in anything that you have told me here. The judges would ask me whether I took the Law Courts for a theater, and intended to make fun of them."

And seeing how disheartened she was, — that she looked like a child whose favorite toy had been broken, that she was so pretty that he would have liked to kiss her hands in his devotion, and as she seemed to be witty, and very amusing, and as, moreover, he had no objection to such visits being prolonged, when papers had to be looked over, while sitting close together, — Maître Garrulier appeared to be considering. Taking his chin in his hand, he said:

"However, I will think it over; there is sure to be some dark spot that can be made out worse. Write to me, and come and see me again."

In the course of her visits, that black spot had increased so much, and Madame de Baudemont had followed her lawyer's advice so punctually, and had played on the various strings so skillfully that a few months later, after a lawsuit which is still spoken of in the Courts of Justice, and during the course of which the President had to take off his spec-

tacles, and to use his pocket-handkerchief noisily, the divorce was pronounced in favor of the Countess Marie Anne Nicole Bournet de Baudemont, *née* de Tanchart de Peothus.

The Count, who was nonplussed at such an adventure turning out so seriously, first of all flew into a terrible rage, rushed off to the lawyer's office and threatened to cut off his knavish ears for him. But when his access of fury was over, and he thought of it, he shrugged his shoulders and said:

“All the better for her, if it amuses her!”

Then he bought Baron Silberstein's yacht, and with some friends got up a cruise to Ceylon and India.

Marie Anne began by triumphing, and felt as happy as a schoolgirl going home for the holidays; she committed every possible folly, and soon, tired, satiated and disgusted, began to yawn, cried, and found out that she had sacrificed her happiness, like a millionaire who has gone mad and has cast his banknotes and shares into the river, and that she was nothing more than a disabled waif and stray. Consequently, she now married again, as the solitude of her home made her morose from morning till night; and then, besides, she found

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a woman requires a mansion when she goes into society, to race meetings, or to the theater.

And so, while she became a marchioness, and pronounced her second "Yes," before a very few friends, at the office of the mayor of the English urban district, malicious people in the Faubourg were making fun of the whole affair, and affirming this and that, whether rightly or wrongly, and comparing the present husband to the former one, even declaring that he had partially been the cause of the former divorce. Meanwhile Monsieur de Baudemont was wandering over the four quarters of the globe trying to overcome his homesickness, and to deaden his longing for love, which had taken possession of his heart and of his body, like a slow poison.

He traveled through the most out-of-the-way places, and the most lonely countries, and spent months and months at sea, and plunged into every kind of dissipation and debauchery. But neither the supple forms nor the luxurious gestures of the bayadères, nor the large passive eyes of the Creoles, nor flirtations with English girls with hair the color of new cider, nor nights of waking dreams when he saw new constellations in the sky,

nor dangers during which a man thinks it is all over with him, and mutters a few words of prayer in spite of himself, when the waves are high, and the sky black, nothing was able to make him forget that little Parisian woman who smelled so sweet that she might have been taken for a bouquet of rare flowers; who was so coaxing, so curious, so funny; who never had the same caprice, the same smile, or the same look twice, and who, at bottom, was worth more than many others, either saints or sinners.

He thought of her constantly, during long hours of sleeplessness. He carried her portrait about with him in the breast pocket of his pea-jacket — a charming portrait in which she was smiling, and showing her white teeth between her half-open lips. Her gentle eyes with their magnetic look had a happy, frank expression, and from the mere arrangement of her hair one could see that she was fair among the fair.

He used to kiss that portrait of the woman who had been his wife as if he wished to efface it, would look at it for hours, and then throw himself down on the netting and sob like a child as he looked at the infinite expanse

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before him, seeming to see their lost happiness, the joys of their perished affections, and the divine remembrance of their love, in the monotonous waste of green waters. And he tried to accuse himself for all that had occurred, and not to be angry with her, to think that his grievances were imaginary, and to adore her in spite of everything and always.

And so he roamed about the world, tossed to and fro, suffering and hoping he knew not what. He ventured into the greatest dangers, and sought for death just as a man seeks for his mistress, and death passed close to him without touching him, perhaps amused at his grief and misery.

For he was as wretched as a stone-breaker, as one of those poor devils who work and nearly break their backs over the hard flints the whole day long, under the scorching sun or the cold rain; and Marie Anne herself was not happy, for she was pining for the past and remembered their former love.

At last, however, he returned to France, changed, tanned by exposure, sun, and rain, and transformed as if by some witch's philter.

Nobody would have recognized the elegant and effeminate clubman, in this corsair with

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broad shoulders, a skin the color of tan, with very red lips, who rolled a little in his walk; who seemed to be stifled in his black dress-coat, but who still retained the distinguished manners and bearing of a nobleman of the last century, one of those who, when he was ruined, fitted out a privateer, and fell upon the English wherever he met them, from St. Malo to Calcutta. And wherever he showed himself his friends exclaimed:

“Why! Is that you? I should never have known you again!”

He was very nearly starting off again immediately; he even telegraphed orders to Havre to get the steam-yacht ready for sea directly, when he heard that Marie Anne had married again.

He saw her in the distance, at the Théâtre Français one Tuesday, and when he noticed how pretty, how fair, how desirable she was, — looking so melancholy, with all the appearance of an unhappy soul that regrets something, — his determination grew weaker, and he delayed his departure from week to week, and waited, without knowing why, until, at last, worn out with the struggle, watching her wherever she went, more in love with her

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than he had ever been before, he wrote her long, mad, ardent letters in which his passion overflowed like a stream of lava.

He altered his handwriting, as he remembered her restless brain, and her many whims. He sent her the flowers which he knew she liked best, and told her that she was his life, that he was dying of waiting for her, of longing for her, for her, his idol.

At last, very much puzzled and surprised, guessing — who knows? — from the instinctive beating of her heart, and her general emotion, that it must be he this time, he whose soul she had tortured with such cold cruelty, and knowing that she could make amends for the past and bring back their former love, she replied to him, and granted him the meeting that he asked for. She fell into his arms, and they both sobbed with joy and ecstasy. Their kisses were those which lips give only when they have lost each other and found each other again at last, when they meet and exhaust themselves in each others' looks, thirsting for tenderness, love, and enjoyment.

* * * * *

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Last week Count de Baudemont carried off Marie Anne quietly and coolly, just as one resumes possession of one's house on returning from a journey, and drives out the intruders. And when Maître Garrulier was told of this unheard-of scandal, he rubbed his hands — the long, delicate hands of a sensual prelate — and exclaimed:

“That is absolutely logical, and I should like to be in their place.”



THE ENGLISHMAN



THEY made a circle around Judge Bermutier, who was giving his opinion of the mysterious affair that had happened at Saint-Cloud. For a month Paris had doted on this inexplicable crime. No one could understand it at all.

M. Bermutier, standing with his back to the chimney, talked about it, discussed the divers opinions, but came to no conclusions.

Many women had risen and come nearer, remaining standing, with eyes fixed upon the shaven mouth of the magistrate, whence issued these gravewords. They shivered and vibrated, crisp through their curious fear, through that eager, insatiable need of terror which haunted their souls, torturing them like a hunger.

One of them, paler than the others, after a silence, said:

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"It is frightful. It touches the supernatural. We shall never know anything about it."

The magistrate turned toward her, saying:

"Yes, Madame, it is probable that we never shall know anything about it. As for the word 'supernatural,' when you come to use that, it has no place here. We are in the presence of a crime skillfully conceived, very skillfully executed, and so well enveloped in mystery that we cannot separate the impenetrable circumstances which surround it. But, once in my life, I had to follow an affair which seemed truly to be mixed up with something very unusual. However, it was necessary to give it up, as there was no means of explaining it."

Many of the ladies called out at the same time, so quickly that their voices sounded as one:

"Oh! tell us about it."

M. Bermutier smiled gravely, as judges should, and replied:

"You must not suppose, for an instant, that I, at least, believed there was anything superhuman in the adventure. I believe only in normal causes. And, if in place of using

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the word 'supernatural' to express what we cannot comprehend we should simply use the word 'inexplicable,' it would be much better. In any case, the surrounding circumstances in the affair I am going to relate to you, as well as the preparatory circumstances, have affected me much. Here are the facts:

"I was then Judge of Instruction at Ajaccio, a little white town lying on the border of an admirable gulf that was surrounded on all sides by high mountains.

"What I particularly had to look after there were the affairs of vendetta. Some of them were superb; as dramatic as possible, ferocious, and heroic. We find there the most beautiful subjects of vengeance that one could dream of,—hatred a century old, appeased for a moment but never extinguished, abominable plots, assassinations becoming massacres, and almost glorious battles. For two years I heard of nothing but the price of blood, of the terribly prejudiced Corsican who is bound to avenge all injury upon the person of him who is the cause of it, or upon his nearest descendants. I saw old men and infants, cousins, with their throats cut, and my head was full of these stories.

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“One day we learned that an Englishman had rented for some years a little villa at the end of the gulf. He had brought with him a French domestic, picked up at Marseilles on the way.

“Soon everybody was occupied with this singular person, who lived alone in his house, only going out to hunt and fish. He spoke to no one, never came to the town, and, every morning, practiced shooting with a pistol and a rifle for an hour or two.

“Some legends about him were abroad. They pretended that he was a high personage fled from his own country for political reasons; then they affirmed that he was concealing himself after committing some frightful crime. They even cited some of the particularly horrible details.

“In my capacity of judge, I wished to get some information about this man. But it was impossible to learn anything. He called himself Sir John Rowell.

“I contented myself with watching him closely; although, in reality, there seemed nothing to suspect regarding him.

“Nevertheless, as rumors on his account continued, grew, and became general, I re-

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solved to try to see this stranger myself, and for this purpose began to hunt regularly in the neighborhood of his property.

“ I waited long for an occasion. It finally came in the form of a partridge which I shot and killed before the very nose of the Englishman. My dog brought it to me; but, immediately taking it, I went and begged Sir John Rowell to accept the dead bird, excusing myself for intrusion.

“ He was a tall man with red hair and red beard, very large, a sort of placid, polite Hercules. He had none of the so-called British haughtiness, and heartily thanked me for the delicacy in French, with a beyond-the-Channel accent. At the end of a month we had chatted together five or six times.

“ Finally, one evening, as I was passing by his door, I perceived him astride a chair in the garden, smoking his pipe. I saluted him and he asked me in to have a glass of beer. It was not necessary for him to repeat before I accepted.

“ He received me with the fastidious courtesy of the English, spoke in praise of France and of Corsica, and declared that he loved that country and that shore.

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"Then, with great precaution, in the form of a lively interest, I put some questions to him about his life and his projects. He responded without embarrassment, told me that he had traveled much, in Africa, in the Indies, and in America. He added, laughing:

" 'I have had many adventures, oh! yes.'

"I began to talk about hunting, and he gave me many curious details of hunting the hippopotamus, the tiger, the elephant, and even of hunting the gorilla.

"I said: 'All these animals are very formidable.'

"He laughed: 'Oh! no. The worst animal is man.' Then he began to laugh, with the hearty laugh of a big contented Englishman. He continued:

" 'I have often hunted man, also.'

"He spoke of weapons and asked me to go into his house to see his guns of various makes and kinds.

"His drawing-room was hung in black, in black silk embroidered with gold. There were great yellow flowers running over the somber stuff, shining like fire.

" 'It is Japanese cloth,' he said.

"But in the middle of a large panel, a

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strange thing attracted my eye. Upon a square of red velvet, a black object was attached. I approached and found it was a hand, the hand of a man. Not a skeleton hand, white and characteristic, but a black, desiccated hand, with yellow joints with the muscles bare and on them traces of old blood, of blood that seemed like a scale, over the bones sharply cut off at about the middle of the fore-arm, as with a blow of a hatchet. About the wrist was an enormous iron chain, riveted, soldered to this unclean member, attaching it to the wall by a ring sufficiently strong to hold an elephant.

“ I asked: ‘ What is that ? ’

“ The Englishman responded tranquilly:

“ ‘ It belonged to my worst enemy. It came from America. It was broken with a saber, cut off with a sharp stone, and dried in the sun for eight days. Oh, very good for me, that was ! ’

“ I touched the human relic, which must have belonged to a colossus. The fingers were immoderately long and attached by enormous tendons that held the straps of skin in place. This dried hand was frightful to see, making one think, naturally, of the vengeance of a savage.

"I said: 'This man must have been very strong.'

"With gentleness the Englishman answered:

" 'Oh! yes; but I was stronger than he. I put this chain on him to hold him.'

"I thought he spoke in jest and replied:

" 'The chain is useless now that the hand cannot escape.'

"Sir John Rowell replied gravely: 'It always wishes to escape. The chain is necessary.'

"With a rapid, questioning glance, I asked myself: 'Is he mad, or is that an unpleasant joke?'

"But the face remained impenetrable, tranquil, and friendly. I spoke of other things and admired the guns.

"Nevertheless, I noticed three loaded revolvers on the pieces of furniture, as if this man lived in constant fear of attack.

"I went there many times after that; then for some time I did not go. We had become accustomed to his presence: he had become indifferent to us.

"A whole year slipped away. Then, one morning, toward the end of November, my

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domestic awoke me with the announcement that Sir John Rowell had been assassinated in the night.

“A half hour later, I entered the Englishman’s house with the central commissary and the captain of police. The servant, lost in despair, was weeping at the door. I suspected him at first, but afterward found that he was innocent.

“The guilty one could never be found.

“Upon entering Sir John’s drawing-room, I perceived his dead body stretched out upon its back, in the middle of the room. His waistcoat was torn, a sleeve was hanging, and it was evident that a terrible struggle had taken place.

“The Englishman had been strangled! His frightfully black and swollen face seemed to express an abominable fear; he held something between his set teeth; and his neck, pierced with five holes, apparently made with a pointed iron, was covered with blood.

“A doctor joined us. He examined closely the prints of fingers in the flesh and pronounced these strange words:

“‘One would think he had been strangled by a skeleton.’

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“A shiver ran down my back and I cast my eyes to the place on the wall where I had seen the horrible, torn-off hand. It was no longer there. The chain was broken and hanging.

“Then I bent over the dead man and found in his mouth a piece of one of the fingers of the missing hand, cut off, or rather sawed off, by the teeth exactly at the second joint.

“Then they tried to collect evidence. They could find nothing. No door had been forced, no window opened, or piece of furniture moved. The two watch-dogs on the premises had not been aroused.

“Here, in a few words, is the deposition of the servant:

“For a month, his master had seemed agitated. He had received many letters, which he had burned immediately. Often, taking a whip, in anger which seemed like dementia, he had struck in fury this dried hand, fastened to the wall and taken, one knew not how, at the moment of a crime.

“He had retired late and shut himself in with care. He always carried arms. Often in the night he talked out loud, as if he were quarreling with some one. On that night,

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however, there had been no noise, and it was only on coming to open the windows that the servant had found Sir John assassinated. He suspected no one.

“I communicated what I knew of the death to the magistrates and public officers, and they made minute inquiries upon the whole island. They discovered nothing.

“One night, three months after the crime, I had a frightful nightmare. It seemed to me that I saw that hand, that horrible hand, running like a scorpion or a spider along my curtains and my walls. Three times I awoke, three times I fell asleep and again saw that hideous relic galloping about my room, moving its fingers like paws.

“The next day they brought it to me, found in the cemetery upon the tomb where Sir John Rowell was interred — for they had not been able to find his family. The index finger was missing.

“This, ladies, is my story. I know no more about it.”

The ladies were terrified, pale, and shivering. One of them cried:

“But that is not the end, for there was no

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explanation! We cannot sleep if you do not tell us what was your idea of the reason of it all."

The magistrate smiled with severity, and answered:

"Oh! certainly, ladies, but it will spoil all your terrible dreams. I simply think that the legitimate proprietor of the hand was not dead and that he came for it with the one that remained to him. But I was never able to find out how he did it. It was one kind of revenge."

One of the women murmured:

"No, it could not be thus."

And the Judge of Information, smiling still, concluded:

"I told you in the beginning that my explanation would not satisfy you."



SENTIMENT



T was during the hunting season, at the country seat of the De Bannevilles. The autumn was rainy and dull. The red leaves, instead of crackling under foot, rotted in the hollows after the heavy showers.

The forest, almost leafless, was as humid as a bath-room. There was a moldy odor under the great trees, stripped of their fruits, which enveloped one on entering, as if a lye had been made from the steeped herbs, the soaked earth, and the continuous rainfall. The hunters' ardor was dampened, the dogs were sullen, their tails lowered and their hair matted against their sides, while the young huntresses, their habits drenched with rain, returned each evening depressed in body and spirit.

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In the great drawing-room, after dinner, they played lotto, but without enthusiasm, as the wind made a clattering noise upon the shutters and forced the old weather vanes into a spinning-top tournament. Some one suggested telling stories, as they are told in books; but no one could think of anything very amusing. The hunters narrated some of their adventures with the gun, the slaughter of wolves, for example; and the ladies racked their brains without finding anywhere the imagination of Scheherazade.

They were about to abandon this form of diversion, when a young lady, carelessly playing with the hand of her old, unmarried aunt, noticed a little ring made of blond hair, which she had often seen before but thought nothing about.

Moving it gently about the finger she said, suddenly: "Tell us the history of this ring, Auntie; it looks like the hair of a child."

The old maiden reddened and then grew pale, then in a trembling voice she replied: "It is sad, so sad that I never care to speak about it. All the unhappiness of my life is centered in it. I was young then, but the memory of it remains so painful that I weep whenever I think of it."

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They wished very much to hear the story, but the aunt refused to tell it; finally, they urged so much that she at length consented.

“ You have often heard me speak of the Santèze family, now extinct. I knew the last three men of this family. They all died within three years in the same manner. This hair belonged to the last one. He was thirteen years old, when he killed himself for me. That appears very strange to you, doesn't it ?

“ It was a singular race, a race of fools, if you will, but of charming fools, of fools for love. All, from father to son, had these violent passions, waves of emotion which drove them to deeds most exalted, to fanatical devotion, and even to crime. Devotion was to them what it is to certain religious souls. Those who become monks are not of the same nature as drawing-room favorites. One might almost say, as a proverb, ‘ He loved like a Santèze.’

“ To see them was to divine this characteristic. They all had curly hair, growing low upon the brow, beard crinkly, eyes large, very large, whose rays seemed to penetrate and disturb you, without your knowing just why.

“ The grandfather of the one of whom this

is the only souvenir, after many adventures, and some duels on account of entanglements with women, when toward sixty became passionately taken with the daughter of his farmer. I knew them both. She was blonde, pale, distinguished looking, with a soft voice and a sweet look, so sweet that she reminded one of a madonna. The old lord took her home with him, and immediately became so captivated that he was unable to pass a minute away from her. His daughter and his daughter-in-law, who lived in the house, found this perfectly natural, so much was love a tradition of the family. When one was moved by a great passion, nothing surprised them, and, if anyone expressed a different notion before them, of disunited lovers, or revenge after some treachery, they would both say, in the same desolate voice: 'Oh! how he (or she) must have suffered before coming to that!' Nothing more. They were moved with pity by all dramas of the heart and never spoke slightly of them, even when they were unworthy.

"One autumn, a young man, M. de Gradelle, invited for the hunting, eloped with the young woman.

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“ M. de Santèze remained calm, as if nothing had happened. But one morning they found him dead in the kennel in the midst of the dogs.

“ His son died in the same fashion, in a hotel in Paris, while on a journey in 1841, after having been deceived by an opera singer.

“ He left a child of twelve years, and a widow, the sister of my mother. She came with the little one to live at my father's house, on the De Bertillon estate. I was then seventeen.

“ You could not imagine what an astonishing, precocious child this little Santèze was. One would have said that all the powers of tenderness, all the exaltation of his race had fallen upon this one, the last. He was always dreaming and walking alone in a great avenue of elms that led from the house to the woods. I often watched this sentimental youngster from my window, as he walked up and down with his hands behind his back, with bowed head, sometimes stopping to look up, as if he saw and comprehended things beyond his age and experience.

“ Often after dinner, on clear nights, he would say to me: ‘ Let us go and dream, Cousin.’ And we would go together into the

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park. He would stop abruptly in the clear spaces, where the white vapor floats, that soft light with which the moon lights up the clearings in the woods, and say to me, seizing my hand: 'Look! Look there! But you do not understand, I feel it. If you comprehended, you would be happy. One must know how to love.' I would laugh and embrace him, this boy, who loved me until his dying day.

"Often, too, after dinner, he would seat himself upon my mother's knee. 'Come, Aunt,' he would say to her, 'tell us some love story.' And my mother, for his pleasure, would tell him all the family legends, the passionate adventures of his fathers, as they had been told a thousand times, true and false. It is these stories that have ruined these men; they never concealed anything, and prided themselves upon not allowing a descendant of their house to lie.

"He would be uplifted, this little one, by these terrible or affecting tales, and sometimes he would clap his hands and cry out: 'I, too, I, too, know how to love, better than any of them.'

"Then he began to pay me his court; a

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timid, profoundly tender devotion, so droll that one could but laugh at it. Each morning I had flowers picked by him, and each evening, before going to his room, he would kiss my hand, murmuring: 'I love you!'

"I was guilty, very guilty, and I have wept since, unceasingly, doing penance all my life, by remaining an old maid — or, rather, an affianced widow, his widow. I amused myself with this childish devotion, even inciting him. I was coquettish, enticing as if he were a man, caressing and deceiving. I excited this child. It was a joke to me, and a pleasing diversion to his mother and mine. He was twelve years old! Think of it! Who would have taken seriously this passion of a midget! I kissed him as much as he wished. I even wrote sweet letters to him that our mothers read. And he responded with letters of fire, that I still have. He had a belief all his own in our intimacy and love, judging himself a man. We had forgotten that he was a Santèze!

"This lasted nearly a year. One evening, in the park, he threw himself down at my knees, kissing the hem of my dress, with furious earnestness, repeating: 'I love you!'

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I love you! I love you! and shall, even to death. If you ever deceive me, understand, if you ever leave me for another, I shall do as my father did —' And he added, in a low voice that gave one the shivers: 'You know what I shall do!'

"Then, as I remained amazed and dumb-founded, he got up and, stretching himself on tiptoe, for I was much taller than he, he repeated in my ear, my name, my first name, 'Genevieve!' in a voice so sweet, so pretty, so tender that I trembled to my very feet.

"I muttered: 'Let us return to the house!' He said nothing further, but followed me. As we were ascending the steps, he stopped me and said: 'You know if you abandon me, I shall kill myself.'

"I understood now that I had gone too far, and immediately became more reserved. When he reproached me for it, one day, I answered him: 'You are now too large for this kind of joking, and too young for serious love. I will wait.'

"I believed myself freed from him.

"He was sent away to school in the autumn. When he returned, the following summer, I had become engaged. He understood at once,

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and for over a week preserved so calm an appearance that I was much disturbed.

“The ninth day, in the morning, I perceived, on rising, a little paper slipped under my door. I seized it and read: ‘You have abandoned me, and you know what I said. You have ordered my death. As I do not wish to be found by anyone but you, come into the park, at the place where last year I said that I loved you, and look up.’

“I felt myself becoming mad. I dressed quickly and ran quickly, so quickly that I fell exhausted at the designated spot. His little school cap was on the ground in the mud. It had rained all night. I raised my eyes and saw something concealed by the leaves, for there was a wind blowing, a strong wind.

“After that, I knew nothing of what I did. I shouted, fainted, perhaps, and fell, then got up and ran to the house. I recovered my reason in my bed, with my mother for my pillow.

“I at first believed that I had dreamed all this in a frightful delirium. I muttered: ‘And he, he — Gontran, where is he —’

“Then they told me it was all true. I dared not look at him again, but I asked for

a lock of his blond hair. Here — it — is — ”
And the old lady held out her hand in a gesture of despair.

Then, after much use of her handkerchief and drying of her eyes, she continued: “ I broke off my engagement without saying why — and I — have remained always the — widow of this child thirteen years old.”

Then her head fell upon her breast and she wept pensively for a long time.

And, as they dispersed to their rooms for the night, a great hunter, whose quiet she had disturbed somewhat, whispered in the ear of his neighbor:

“ What a misfortune to be so sentimental! Don't you think so ? ”



THE FISHERMEN



UTS AND WOUNDS WHICH
CAUSED DEATH.

That was the heading of the charge which brought Léopold Renard, upholsterer, before the Assize Court.

Round him were the principal witnesses, Madame Flamèche, widow of the victim, Louis Ladureau, cabinetmaker, and Jean Durdent, plumber.

Near the criminal was his wife, dressed in black, a little ugly woman, who looked like a monkey dressed as a lady.

This is how Renard described the drama: "Good heavens! it is a misfortune of which I am the first and last victim, and with which my will has nothing to do. The facts are their own commentary, Monsieur le Président. I am an honest man, a hard-working man, an upholsterer in the same street for the last sixteen years, known, liked, respected, and

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esteemed by all, as my neighbors have testified, even the porter, who is not *folâtr* every day. I am fond of work, I am fond of saving, I like honest men, and respectable pleasures. That is what has ruined me, so much the worse for me; but as my will had nothing to do with it, I continue to respect myself.

“ Every Sunday for the last five years, my wife and I have spent the day at Passy. We get fresh air, not to say that we are fond of fishing — as fond of it as we are of small onions. Mélie inspired me with that passion, the jade; she is more enthusiastic than I am, the scold, and all the mischief in this business is her fault, as you will see immediately.

“ I am strong and mild-tempered, without a pennyworth of malice in me. But she! oh! la! la! she looks insignificant, she is short and thin, but she does more mischief than a weasel. I do not deny that she has some good qualities; she has some, and those very important to a man in business. But her character! Just ask about it in the neighborhood; even the porter's wife, who has just sent me about my business — she will tell you something about it.

“ Every day she used to find fault with my mild temper: ‘I would not put up with this!

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I would not put up with that.' If I had listened to her, Monsieur le Président, I should have had at least three bouts of fisticuffs a month."

Madame Renard interrupted him: "And for good reasons too; they laugh best who laugh last."

He turned toward her frankly: "Oh! very well, I can blame you, since you were the cause of it."

Then, facing the President again, he said:

"I will continue. We used to go to Passy every Saturday evening, so as to be able to begin fishing at daybreak the next morning. It is a habit which has become second nature with us, as the saying is. Three years ago this summer I discovered a place, oh! such a spot! There, in the shade, were eight feet of water at least, and perhaps ten, a hole with a *rétour* under the bank, a regular retreat for fish and a paradise for any fisherman. I might look upon that hole as my property, Monsieur le Président, as I was its Christopher Columbus. Everybody in the neighborhood knew it, without making any opposition. They used to say: 'That is Renard's place'; and nobody would have gone to it, not even

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Monsieur Plumsay, who is renowned, be it said without any offense, for appropriating other people's places.

“ Well, I went as usual to that place, of which I felt as certain as if I had owned it. I had scarcely got there on Saturday, when I got into ‘ Delila,’ with my wife. ‘ Delila ’ is my Norwegian boat, which I had built by Fourmaise, and which is light and safe. Well, as I said, we got into the boat and we were going to bait, and for baiting there is nobody to be compared with me, and they all know it. You want to know with what I bait ? I cannot answer that question; it has nothing to do with the accident; I cannot answer, that is my secret. There are more than three hundred people who have asked me; I have been offered glasses of brandy and liqueurs, fried fish, *mate-lots*,* to make me tell! But just go and try whether the chub will come. Ah! they have patted my stomach to get at my secret, my recipe. Only my wife knows, and she will not tell it, any more than I shall! Is not that so, *Mélie* ? ”

* A preparation of several kinds of fish, with a sharp sauce.

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The President of the Court interrupted him:

“Just get to the facts as soon as you can.”

The accused continued: “I am getting to them; I am getting to them. Well, on Saturday, July 8, we left by the five twenty-five train, and before dinner we went to ground-bait as usual. The weather promised to keep fine, and I said to Mélie: ‘All right for to-morrow!’ And she replied: ‘It looks like it.’ We never talk more than that together.

“And then we returned to dinner. I was happy and thirsty, and that was the cause of everything. I said to Mélie: ‘Look here, Mélie, it is fine weather, so suppose I drink a bottle of *Casque à mèche*.’ That is a little white wine which we have christened so, because if you drink too much of it it prevents you from sleeping and is the opposite of a nightcap. Do you understand me?

“She replied: ‘You can do as you please, but you will be ill again, and will not be able to get up to-morrow.’ That was true, sensible, prudent, and clear-sighted, I must confess. Nevertheless, I could not withstand it, and I drank my bottle. It all comes from that.

“Well, I could not sleep. By Jove! It kept me awake till two o’clock in the morning, and

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then I went to sleep so soundly that I should not have heard the angel shouting at the Last Judgment.

“In short, my wife woke me at six o'clock and I jumped out of bed, hastily put on my trousers and jersey, washed my face and jumped on board ‘Delila.’ But it was too late, for when I arrived at my hole it was already taken. Such a thing had never happened to me in three years, and it made me feel as if I were being robbed under my own eyes. I said to myself, ‘Confound it all! confound it!’ And then my wife began to nag at me. ‘Eh! What about your *Casque à mèche*? Get along, you drunkard! Are you satisfied, you great fool?’ I could say nothing, because it was all quite true, and so I landed all the same near the spot and tried to profit by what was left. Perhaps after all the fellow might catch nothing, and go away.

“He was a little thin man, in white linen coat and waistcoat, and with a large straw hat, and his wife, a fat woman who was doing embroidery, was behind him.

“When she saw us take up our position close to their place, she murmured: ‘I suppose there are no other places on the river!’ And

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my wife, who was furious, replied: 'People who know how to behave make inquiries about the habits of the neighborhood before occupying reserved spots.'

"As I did not want a fuss, I said to her: 'Hold your tongue, Mélie. Let them go on, let them go on; we shall see.'

"Well, we had fastened 'Delila' under the willow-tree, and had landed and were fishing side by side, Mélie and I, close to the two others; but here, Monsieur, I must enter into details.

"We had only been there about five minutes when our male neighbor's float began to go down two or three times, and then he pulled out a chub as thick as my thigh, rather less, perhaps, but nearly as big! My heart beat, and the perspiration stood on my forehead, and Mélie said to me: 'Well, you sot, did you see that?'

"Just then, Monsieur Bru, the grocer of Poissy, who was fond of gudgeon fishing, passed in a boat, and called out to me: 'So somebody has taken your usual place, Monsieur Renard?' And I replied: 'Yes, Monsieur Bru, there are some people in this world who do not know the usages of common politeness.'

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"The little man in linen pretended not to hear, nor his fat lump of a wife, either."

Here the President interrupted him a second time: "Take care, you are insulting the widow, Madame Flamèche, who is present."

Renard made his excuses: "I beg your pardon, I beg your pardon, my anger carried me away. Well, not a quarter of an hour had passed when the little man caught another chub, and another almost immediately, and another five minutes later.

"The tears were in my eyes, and then I knew that Madame Renard was boiling with rage, for she kept on nagging at me: 'Oh! how horrid! Don't you see that he is robbing you of your fish? Do you think that you will catch anything? Not even a frog, nothing whatever. Why, my hands are burning, just to think of it.'

"But I said to myself: 'Let us wait until twelve o'clock. Then this poaching fellow will go to lunch, and I shall get my place again.' As for me, Monsieur le Président, I lunch on the spot every Sunday; we bring our provisions in 'Delila.' But there! At twelve o'clock, the wretch produced a fowl out of a

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newspaper, and while he was eating, actually he caught another chub!

“Mélie and I had a morsel also, just a mouthful, a mere nothing, for our heart was not in it.

“Then I took up my newspaper, to aid my digestion. Every Sunday I read the *Gil Blas* in the shade like that, by the side of the water. It is Columbine’s day, you know, Columbine who writes the articles in the *Gil Blas*. I generally put Madame Renard into a passion by pretending to know this Columbine. It is not true, for I do not know her, and have never seen her, but that does not matter; she writes very well, and then she says things straight out for a woman. She suits me, and there are not many of her sort.

“Well, I began to tease my wife, but she got angry immediately, and very angry, and so I held my tongue. At that moment our two witnesses, who are present here, Monsieur Ladureau and Monsieur Durdent, appeared on the other side of the river. We knew each other by sight. The little man began to fish again, and he caught so many that I trembled with vexation, and his wife said: ‘It is an uncommonly good spot, and we will come here

always, *Desiré*.' As for me, a cold shiver ran down my back, and Madame Renard kept repeating: 'You are not a man; you have the blood of a chicken in your veins'; and suddenly I said to her: 'Look here, I would rather go away, or I shall only be doing something foolish.'

"And she whispered to me as if she had put a red-hot iron under my nose: 'You are not a man. Now you are going to run away, and surrender your place! Off you go, *Bazaine*!'

"Well, I felt that, but yet I did not move, while the other fellow pulled out a bream. Oh! I never saw such a large one before, never! And then my wife began to talk aloud, as if she were thinking, and you can see her trickery. She said: 'That is what one might call stolen fish, seeing that we baited the place ourselves. At any rate, they ought to give us back the money we have spent on bait.'

"Then the fat woman in the cotton dress said in turn: 'Do you mean to call us thieves, Madame?' And they began to explain, and then they came to words. Oh! Lord! those creatures know some good ones. They shouted so loud, that our two witnesses, who were on

The Fishermen

the other bank, began to call out by way of a joke: 'Less noise over there; you will prevent your husbands from fishing.'

"The fact is that neither of us moved any more than if we had been two tree-stumps. We remained there, with our noses over the water, as if we had heard nothing, but, by Jove, we heard all the same. 'You are a mere liar.'

" 'You are nothing better than a street-walker.'

" 'You are only a trollop.'

" 'You are a regular strumpet.'

"And so on, and so on; a sailor could not have said more.

"Suddenly I heard a noise behind me, and turned round. It was the other one, the fat woman, who had fallen upon my wife with her parasol. Whack! whack! Mélie got two of them, but she was furious, and she hits hard when she is in a rage, so she caught the fat woman by the hair and then, thump, thump. Slaps in the face rained down like ripe plums. I should have let them go on — women among themselves, men among themselves — it does not do to mix the blows; but the little man in the linen jacket jumped up like a devil and was

going to rush at my wife. Ah! no, no, not that, my friend! I caught the gentleman with the end of my fist, *crash*, crash, one on the nose, the other in the stomach. He threw up his arms and legs and fell on his back into the river, just into the hole.

“I should have fished him out most certainly, Monsieur le Président, if I had had the time. But unfortunately the fat woman got the better of it, and she was drubbing Mélie terribly. I know that I ought not to have assisted her while the man was drinking his fill, but I never thought that he would drown, and said to myself: ‘Bah, it will cool him.’

“I therefore ran up to the women to separate them, and all I received was scratches and bites. Good Lord, what creatures! Well, it took me five minutes, and perhaps ten, to separate those two viragoes. When I turned round, there was nothing to be seen, and the water was as smooth as a lake. The others yonder kept shouting: ‘Fish him out!’ It was all very well to say that, but I cannot swim and still less dive!

“At last the man from the dam came, and two gentlemen with boat-hooks, but it had taken over a quarter of an hour. He was

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found at the bottom of the hole in eight feet of water, as I have said, but he was dead, the poor little man in his linen suit! There are the facts, such as I have sworn to. I am innocent, on my honor."

The witnesses having deposed to the same effect, the accused was acquitted



IN HIS SWEETHEART'S LIVERY



T present she is a great lady, an elegant, intellectual woman, and a celebrated actress. But in the year 1847, when our story begins, she was a beautiful, but not very moral girl, and then it was that the young, talented Hungarian poet who was the first to discover her gifts for the stage made her acquaintance.

The slim, ardent girl, with her bright brown hair and her large blue eyes, attracted the careless poet. He loved her, and all that was good and noble in her nature put forth fresh buds and blossoms in the sunshine of his poetic love.

They lived in an attic in the old imperial city on the Danube; she shared his poverty, his triumphs, and his pleasures, and would have become his true and faithful wife, if the

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Hungarian revolution had not torn him from her arms.

The poet became the soldier of freedom. He followed the Magyar tricolor, and the Honved drums, while she was carried away by the current of the movement in the capital, and might have been seen discharging her musket, like a brave Amazon, at the Croats who were defending the town against Görgey's assaulting battalions.

But at last Hungary was subdued, and was governed as if it had been a conquered country.

It was said that the young poet had fallen at Temesvar. His mistress wept for him, and married another man, which was nothing either new or extraordinary. Her name was now Frau von Kubinyi, but her married life was not happy. One day she remembered that her lover had told her that she had talent for the stage, and as whatever he said had always proved correct, she separated from her husband, studied a few parts, appeared on the stage, and lo! the public, the critics, actors, and writers were lying at her feet.

She obtained a very profitable engagement, and her reputation increased with every part she played. Before the end of a year after

In His Sweetheart's Livery

her first appearance, she was the lioness of society. Everybody paid homage to her, and the wealthiest men tried to obtain her favors. But she remained cold and reserved, until the General commanding the district, who was a handsome man, of noble bearing, and a gentleman in the highest sense of the word, approached her.

Whether she was flattered at seeing that powerful man — before whom millions trembled, who had power over the life and death, the honor and happiness of so many thousands — fettered by her soft curls, or whether her enigmatical heart for once really felt what true love was, suffice it to say that in a short time she was his acknowledged mistress, and her princely lover surrounded her with the luxury of an Eastern queen.

But just then a miracle occurred — the resurrection of a dead man. Frau von Kubinyi was driving through the Corso in the General's carriage; she was lying back negligently in the soft cushions, and looking carelessly at the crowd on the pavement. Then — she caught sight of a common Austrian soldier and screamed aloud.

Nobody heard that cry, which came from

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the depths of a woman's heart, nobody saw how pale and how excited that woman was, who usually seemed made of marble, not even the soldier who was the cause of it. He was a Hungarian poet, who, like so many other *Honveds*,* now wore the uniform of an Austrian soldier.

Two days later, to the poet's no small surprise, he was told to go to the General in command as orderly. When he reported himself to the adjutant, he told him to go to Frau von Kubinyi's, and to await her orders.

Our poet only* knew her by report, but he hated and despised intensely the beautiful woman who had sold herself to the enemy of his country; he had no choice, however, but to obey.

When he arrived at her house, he seemed to be expected, for the porter knew his name, took him into his lodge, and without any further explanation, told him immediately to put on the livery of his mistress, which was lying there ready for him. He ground his teeth, but resigned himself without a word to

* A Hungarian word meaning Defender of the Fatherland. The term *Honved* is applied to the Hungarian *Landwehr*, or militia.

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his wretched though laughable fate; it was quite clear that the actress had some purpose in making the poet wear her livery. He tried to remember whether he could formerly have offended her by his notices as a theatrical critic, but before he could arrive at any conclusion, he was told to present himself to Frau von Kubinyi.* She evidently wished to enjoy his humiliation.

He was shown into a small drawing-room, which was furnished with an amount of taste and magnificence such as he had never seen before, and was told to wait. But he had not been alone many minutes, before the door-curtains were parted and Frau von Kubinyi came in, calm but deadly pale, in a splendid dressing-gown of some Turkish material, and he recognized his former mistress.

“Irma!” he exclaimed.

The cry came from his heart, and affected the heart of this pleasure-surfeited woman so greatly that the next moment she was lying on the breast of the man whom she had believed to be dead, but only for a moment, for he freed himself from her.

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"We are fated to meet again thus!" she began.

"Not through any fault of mine," he replied bitterly.

"And not through mine either," she said quickly; "everybody thought that you were dead, and I wept for you; that is my justification."

"You are really too kind," he replied sarcastically. "How can you condescend to make any excuses to me? I wear your livery; you have to order, and I have to obey; our relative positions are clear enough."

Frau von Kubinyi turned away to hide her tears.

"I did not intend to hurt your feelings," he continued; "but I must confess that it would have been better for both of us, if we had not met again. But what do you mean by making me wear your livery? Is it not enough that I have been robbed of my happiness? Does it afford you any pleasure to humiliate me as well?"

"How can you think that?" the actress exclaimed. "Ever since I discovered your unhappy lot, I have thought of nothing but the means of delivering you from it, and until

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I succeed in doing this, however, I can at least make it more bearable for you."

"I understand," the unhappy poet said with a sneer. "And in order to do this, you have begged your present worshiper to turn your former lover into a footman."

"What a thing to say to me!"

"Can you find any other pleasure for it? You wish to punish me for having loved you, idolized you, I suppose?" the poet continued. "So exactly like a woman! But I can perfectly well understand that the situation promises to have a fresh charm for you."

Before he could finish what he was saying, the actress quickly left the room; he could hear her sobbing, but he did not regret his words, and his contempt and hatred for her only increased when he saw the extravagance and the princely luxury with which she was surrounded. But what was the use of his indignation? He was wearing her livery, he was obliged to wait upon her and to obey her, for she had the corporal's cane at her command. It really seemed as if he incurred the vengeance of the offended woman; as if the General's insolent mistress wished to make

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him feel her whole power; as if he were not to be spared the deepest humiliation.

The General and two of Frau von Kubinyi's friends, who were also servants of the Muses, for one was a ballet dancer and the other an actress, had come to tea, and he was to wait on them.

While it was being made, he heard them laughing in the next room. The blood flew to his head when the butler opened the door and Frau von Kubinyi appeared on the General's arm. She did not, however, look at her new footman, her former lover, triumphantly or contemptuously, but gave him a glance of the deepest commiseration.

Could he, after all, have wronged her?

Hatred and love, contempt and jealousy were struggling in his breast, and when he had to fill the glasses, the bottle shook in his hand.

"Is this the man?" the General said, looking at him closely.

Frau von Kubinyi nodded.

"He was evidently not born for a footman," the General added.

"And still less for a soldier," the actress observed.

These words fell heavily on the unfortunate

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poet's heart, but she was evidently taking his part, and trying to rescue him from his terrible position.

Suspicion, however, once more gained the day.

"She is tired of all pleasures, and satiated with enjoyment," he said to himself; "she requires excitement and it amuses her to see the man whom she formerly loved, and who, as she knows, still loves her, tremble before her. And when she pleases, she can see me tremble; not for my life, but for fear of the disgrace which she can inflict upon me, at any moment, if it should give her any pleasure."

But suddenly the actress gave him a look, which was so sad and so imploring, that he looked down in confusion.

From that time he remained in her house without performing any duties, and without receiving any orders from her; in fact he never saw her, and did not venture to ask after her. Two months had passed in this way, when the General unexpectedly sent for him. He waited, with many others, in the anteroom. The General came back from parade, saw him, and beckoned him to follow him, and as soon as they were alone, said:

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"You are free, as you have been allowed to purchase your discharge."

"Good heavens!" the poet stammered, "how am I to —"

"That is already done," the General replied. "You are free."

"How is it possible? How can I thank your Excellency!"

"You owe me no thanks," he replied; "Frau von Kubinyi bought you out."

The poor poet's heart seemed to stop; he could not speak, nor even stammer a word; but with a low bow, he rushed out and tore wildly through the streets, until he reached the mansion of the woman whom he had so misunderstood, quite out of breath; he must see her again, and throw himself at her feet.

"Where are you going to?" the porter asked him.

"To Frau von Kubinyi's."

"She is not here."

"Not here?"

"She has gone away."

"Gone away? Where to?"

"She started for Paris two hours ago."

BERTHA



Y old friend — one has friends occasionally who are much older than oneself — my old friend Doctor Bonnet had often invited me to spend some time with him at Riom, and as I did not know Auvergne, I made up my mind to go there in the summer of 1876.

I got there by the morning train, and the first person I saw on the platform was the doctor. He was dressed in a gray suit, and wore a soft, black, wide-brimmed, high-crowned felt hat, which was narrow at the top like a chimney pot, a hat which hardly anyone except an Auvergnat would wear, and which smacked of the charcoal-burner. Dressed like that, the doctor had the appearance of an old young man, with a spare body under a thin coat, and a large head covered with white hair.

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He embraced me with that evident pleasure which country people feel when they meet long expected friends, and stretching out his arm said proudly: "This is Auvergne!"

I saw nothing before me, except a range of mountains, whose summits, which resembled truncated cones, must have been extinct volcanoes.

Then, pointing to the name of the station, he said:

"*Riom*, the fatherland of magistrates, the pride of the magistracy, ought rather to be the fatherland of doctors."

"Why?" I asked.

"Why?" he replied with a laugh. "If you transpose the letters, you have the Latin word *mori*, to die. That is the reason why I settled here, my young friend."

And delighted at his own joke, he carried me off, rubbing his hands.

As soon as I had swallowed a cup of coffee, he made me go and see the town. I admired the chemist's house, and the other celebrated houses, which were all black, but as pretty as knickknacks, with their *façades* of sculptured stone. I admired the statue of the Virgin, the patroness of butchers, and he told me an

amusing story about this, which I will relate some other time. Then Doctor Bonnet said to me:

“I must beg you to excuse me for a few minutes while I go and see a patient, and then I will take you to Chatel-Guyon, so as to show you the general aspect of the town, and all the mountain chain of the Puy-de-Dôme, before lunch. You can wait for me outside; I shall only go upstairs and come down immediately.”

He left me outside one of those old, gloomy, silent, melancholy houses which one sees in the provinces. This one appeared to look particularly sinister, and I soon discovered the reason. All the large windows on the first floor were half boarded up with wooden shutters. The upper part of them alone could be opened, as if one had wished to prevent the people who were locked up in that huge stone trunk from looking into the street.

When the doctor came down again, I told him how it had struck me, and he replied:

“You are quite right; the poor creature who is living there must never see what is going on outside. She is a madwoman, or rather an idiot, what you Normans would call

a *Niente*.* It is a miserable story, but a very singular pathological case at the same time. Shall I tell you of it ? ”

I begged him to do so, and he continued:

“ Twenty years ago, the owners of this house, who were my patients, had a daughter who was seemingly like all other girls. But I soon discovered that while her body became admirably developed, her intellect remained stationary.

“ She began to walk very early, but could not talk. At first I thought she was deaf, but discovered that although she heard perfectly, she did not understand anything that was said to her. Violent noises made her start and frightened her, without her understanding how they were caused.

“ She grew up into a superb woman, but she was dumb, from an absolute want of intellect. I tried all means to introduce a gleam of sense into her head, but nothing succeeded. I thought that I noticed that she knew her nurse, though as soon as she was weaned, she failed to recognize her mother. She could never pronounce that word, which is the first that children utter, and the last which men

* A *nothing*, i. e., an idiot.

Bertha

murmur when dying on the field of battle. She sometimes tried to talk, but produced nothing but incoherent sounds.

“ When the weather was fine, she laughed continually, emitting low cries which might be compared to the twittering of birds. When it rained she cried and moaned in a mournful, terrifying manner, like the howling of a dog when death occurs in a house.

“ She was fond of rolling on the grass, like young animals do, and of running about madly. She used to clap her hands every morning when the sun shone into her room, and would jump out of bed and insist, by signs, on being dressed as quickly as possible, so that she might get out.

“ She did not appear to distinguish between people, between her mother and her nurse, or between her father and me, or between the coachman and the cook. I liked her parents, who were very unhappy on her account, very much, and went to see them nearly every day. I dined with them tolerably frequently, which enabled me to remark that Bertha (they had called her Bertha) seemed to recognize the various dishes and to prefer some to others. At that time she was twelve years old, but as

fully formed in figure as a girl of eighteen, and taller than I was. Then, the idea struck me of developing her greediness, and by such means to try and produce some slight power of discernment into her mind — to force her, by the diversity of flavors, if not by reason, to arrive at instinctive distinctions, which would of themselves constitute a species of analysis akin to thought. Later on, by appealing to her senses, and by carefully making use of those which could serve us, we might hope to obtain a kind of reaction on her intellect, and by degrees increase the involuntary action of her brain.

“One day I put two plates before her, one of soup, and the other of very sweet vanilla cream. I made her taste each of them successively, then I let her choose for herself, and she ate the plate of cream. In a short time I made her very greedy, so greedy that it appeared as if the only idea she had in her head was the desire for eating. She recognized the various dishes perfectly, stretched out her hands toward those that she liked, and took hold of them eagerly, crying when they were taken from her. Then I thought I would try and teach her to come to the dining-

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room, when the dinner bell rang. It took a long time, but I succeeded in the end. In her vacant intellect, there was a fixed correlation between the sound and her taste, a correspondence between two senses, an appeal from one to the other, and consequently a sort of connection of ideas, — if one can term an instinctive hyphen between two organic functions an idea, — and so I carried my experiments further, and taught her, with much difficulty, to recognize meal-times on the face of the clock.

“ It was impossible for me for a long time to attract her attention to the hands, but I succeeded in making her remark the clock-work and the striking apparatus. The means I employed were very simple. I asked them not to have the bell rung for lunch, but that everybody should get up and go into the dining-room when the little brass hammer struck twelve o'clock; but I found great difficulty in making her learn to count the strokes. She ran to the door each time she heard the clock strike, but by degrees she learned that all the strokes had not the same value as regarded meals, and she frequently fixed her eyes, guided by her ears, on the dial of the clock.

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“When I noticed that, I took care, every day at twelve and at six o'clock, to place my fingers on the figures twelve and six, as soon as the moment she was waiting for, had arrived. I soon noticed that she attentively followed the motion of the small brass hands, which I had often turned in her presence.

“She had understood! Perhaps I should rather say that she had seized the idea. I had succeeded in getting the knowledge, or rather the sensation of the time into her, just as is the case with carp, who certainly have no clocks, but know that they are fed every day at a certain time.

“When once I had obtained that result, all the clocks and watches in the house occupied her attention almost exclusively. She spent her time in looking at them, in listening to them, and in waiting for meal-times, and once something very funny happened. The striking apparatus of a pretty little Louis XVI. clock that hung at the head of her bed had got out of order, and she noticed it. She sat for twenty minutes, with her eyes on the hands, waiting for it to strike ten, but when the hand passed the figure, she was astonished at not hearing anything. So stupefied was she, in-

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deed, that she sat down, no doubt overwhelmed by a feeling of violent emotion, such as attacks us in the face of some terrible catastrophe. She had the wonderful patience to wait until eleven o'clock, in order to see what would happen, but, as she naturally heard nothing, she was suddenly either seized with a wild fit of rage at having been deceived and imposed upon by appearances, or else was overcome by the fear which a frightened creature feels at some terrible mystery, or by the furious impatience of a passionate individual who meets with some obstacle. She took up the tongs from the fireplace, and struck the clock so violently that she broke it to pieces in a moment.

“It was evident, therefore, that her brain did act and calculate, obscurely it is true, and within very restricted limits, for I could never succeed in making her distinguish persons as she distinguished the time. To stir her intellect, it was necessary to appeal to her passions, in the material sense of the word, and we soon had another, and alas! a very terrible proof of this !

* * * * *

“She had grown up into a splendid girl; a

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perfect type of a race, a sort of lovely and stupid Venus. She was sixteen, and I have rarely seen such perfection of form, such suppleness, and such regular features. I said she was a Venus; yes, a fair, stout, vigorous Venus, with large, bright, vacant eyes, blue as the flowers of the flax plant. She had a large mouth with full lips, the mouth of a glutton, of a sensualist, a mouth made for kisses. Well, one morning her father came into my consulting-room, with a strange look on his face, and sitting down, without even replying to my greeting, he said:

“ ‘I want to speak to you about a very serious matter. Would it be possible — would it be possible for Bertha to marry?’ ”

“ ‘Bertha to marry! Why, it is quite impossible!’ ”

“ ‘Yes, I know, I know,’ he replied. ‘But reflect, doctor — don’t you think — perhaps — we hoped — if she had children — it would be a great shock to her, but a great happiness, and who knows whether maternity might not rouse her intellect?’ ”

“ ‘I was in a state of great perplexity. He was right, and it was possible that such a new situation, and that wonderful instinct of

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maternity which beats in the hearts of the lower animals as it does in the heart of a woman, which makes a hen fly at a dog's jaws to defend her chickens, might bring about a revolution, an utter change in her vacant mind, and set the motionless mechanism of her thoughts into movement. And then, moreover, I immediately remembered a personal instance. Some years previously I had possessed a spaniel bitch which was so stupid that I could do nothing with her, but when she had had pups she became, if not exactly clever, yet as intelligent as many other dogs who have not been thoroughly broken.

"As soon as I foresaw the possibility of this, the wish to get Bertha married grew on me, not so much out of friendship for her and her poor parents, as from scientific curiosity. What would happen? It was a singular problem, and I said to her father :

" 'Perhaps you are right. You might make the attempt — but — but you will never find a man to consent to marry her.'

" 'I have found somebody,' he said in a low voice.

"I was dumfounded, and said: 'Somebody

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really suitable? Some one of your own rank and position in society?’

“ ‘Decidedly,’ he replied.

“ ‘Oh! And may I ask his name?’

“ ‘I came on purpose to tell you and to consult you. It is Monsieur Gaston du Boys de Lucelles.’

“ I felt inclined to exclaim: ‘What a wretch,’ but I held my tongue, and after a few moments’ silence, I said:

“ ‘Oh! Very good. I see nothing against it.’

“ The poor man shook me heartily by the hand, and said:

“ ‘She is to be married next month.’

* * * * *

“ Monsieur Gaston du Boys de Lucelles was a scapegrace of good family, who, after having spent all that he had inherited from his father, and having incurred debts by all kinds of doubtful means, had been trying to discover some other way of obtaining money. Hence this method. He was a good-looking young fellow, and in capital health, but fast — one of that odious tribe of provincial fast men — and appeared to me to be the sort of a husband who could be got rid of later, by making

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him an allowance. He came to the house to pay his addresses, and to strut about before the idiot girl, who, however, seemed to please him. He brought her flowers, kissed her hands, sat at her feet, and looked at her with affectionate eyes; but she took no notice of any of his attentions, and made no distinction between him and the other persons about her.

“However, the marriage took place, and you may guess how excited my curiosity was. I went to see Bertha the next day, to try and discover from her looks whether any feelings had been roused in her, but I found her just the same as she was every day, wholly taken up with the clock and dinner, while he, on the contrary, appeared really in love, and tried to rouse his wife’s spirits and affection by little endearments and such caresses as one bestows on a kitten. He could think of nothing better.

“I called upon the married couple pretty frequently, and I soon perceived that the young woman knew her husband, and gave him those eager looks which she had hitherto only bestowed on sweet dishes.

“She followed his movements, knew his step on the stairs or in the neighboring rooms

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and clapped her hands when he came in. Her face was changed and brightened by the flames of profound happiness and of desire. She loved him with her whole body and with all her being, to the very depths of her poor, weak soul, and with all her heart, the poor heart of some grateful animal. It was really a delightful and innocent picture of simple passion, of carnal and yet modest passion, such as nature planted in mankind, before man complicated and disfigured it by all the various shades of sentiment. But he soon grew tired of this ardent, beautiful, dumb creature, and did not spend more than an hour a day with her, thinking it sufficient to devote his nights to her, and she began to suffer in consequence. She used to wait for him from morning till night, with her eyes on the clock. She did not even look after the meals now, for he took all his away from home, Clermont, Chatel-Guyon, Royat, no matter where, as long as he was not obliged to come home.

“She began to grow thin; every other thought, every other wish, every other expectation, and every other confused hope disappeared from her mind, and the hours during

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which she did not see him became hours of terrible suffering to her. Soon he used frequently not to come home at night; he spent them with women at the Casino at Royat, and did not come home until daybreak. But she never went to bed before he returned. She would remain sitting motionless in an easy-chair, with her eyes fixed on the clock, which turned so slowly and regularly round the china face on which the hours were painted.

“When she heard the trot of his horse in the distance, she would sit up with a start. When he came into the room, she would get up with the movements of a phantom, and point to the clock, as if to say to him: ‘Look how late it is!’

“He began to be afraid of this amorous and jealous, half-witted woman, and flew into a rage, like brutes do; and one night he even went so far as to strike her, so they sent for me. When I arrived she was writhing and screaming in a terrible crisis of pain, anger, passion, how do I know what? Can anyone tell what goes on in such undeveloped brains?

“I calmed her by subcutaneous injections of morphine, and forbade her to see that man

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again, for I saw clearly that marriage would infallibly kill her, by degrees.

* * * * *

“Then she went mad! Yes, my dear friend, that idiot has gone mad. She is always thinking of him and waiting for him; she waits for him all day and night, awake or asleep, at this very moment, ceaselessly. When I saw her getting thinner and thinner, never taking her eyes off the clocks, I had them removed from the house. I thus make it impossible for her to count the hours, or to remember, from her indistinct reminiscences, at what time he used to come home. I hope to destroy the recollection of it in time, and to extinguish that ray of thought which I had kindled with so much difficulty.

“The other day I tried an experiment. I offered her my watch. She took it and looked at it for some time; then she began to scream terribly, as if the sight of that little object had suddenly aroused her recollection, which was beginning to grow indistinct. She is pitifully thin now, with hollow and brilliant eyes, and she walks up and down ceaselessly, like a wild beast does in its cage. I have had bars put to the windows, and have had the seats fixed to

Bertha

the floor, so as to prevent her from looking to see whether he is coming.

“Oh! her poor parents! What a life they must lead!”

We had got to the top of the hill, and the doctor turned round and said to me:

“Look at Riom from here.”

The gloomy town looked like some ancient city. Behind it, a green, wooded plain studded with towns and villages, and bathed in a soft blue haze, extended until it was lost in the distance. Far away, on my right, there was a range of lofty mountains with round summits, or truncated cones, and the doctor began to enumerate the villages, towns, and hills, and to give me the history of all of them. But I did not listen to him; I was thinking of nothing but the mad woman, and only saw her. She seemed to be hovering over that vast extent of country like a mournful ghost, and I asked him abruptly:

“What has become of the husband?”

My friend seemed rather surprised, but after a few moments' hesitation, he replied:

“He is living at Royat, on an allowance that they make him, and is quite happy; he leads a very fast life.”

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As we were going slowly back, both of us silent and rather low-spirited, an English dog-cart, drawn by a thoroughbred horse, came up behind us and passed us rapidly. The doctor took me by the arm:

"There he is," he said.

I saw nothing except a gray felt hat, cocked over one ear, above a pair of broad shoulders, driving off in a cloud of dust.



A MESSAGE OF LOVE
IN THE GARDEN OF THE TUILERIES



COME to me, little child,
whose mother sweet
Makes my poor heart with
throbs of passion beat.
Upon this bench she often
loves to stay,
Watching her darling child
before her play.

Pale is she, and her hair is such as gleams
Through fancy's softest, most delicious dreams.
I see it now, above her forehead lie,
Bright as the radiance of the starlight sky.
Come to me, dearest child, and let me press
Thy rosy lips with deepest tenderness.
Let me once more thy large blue eyes behold,
And plant one kiss upon thy curls of gold.
Thus, little darling, would I make thee bear
A load of kisses to her, unaware.
And thus, when thou returnest to her side,
And the soft darkness comes with eventide,

De Maupassant

And when thy little arms at last are thrown
Around that tapering neck I may not own,
Upon thy rosy lip she still may find
And on those locks of gold she loves to bind,
The burning kiss, my lips have left behind.
Ah! sweet shall that be as the dawn of love.
Then shall she say, while trembling flushes
move
Across the cheeks she guards from looks of
mine,
And takes my kiss from those curled locks of
thine,
“What is it on my daughter’s brow to-night
That stirs my bosom with this strange de-
light?”



DISCOVERY



WAS a child, I loved to read
of fight

And warfare, and the
heavy coat of mail

Worn patiently by many a
doughty knight.

I loved those paladins,
who once set sail,

To wrest the Holy Sepulcher from hands
Of Paynims, and who died in foreign lands.

I loved that English Richard, at whose name
My young heart beat with ardor, when they
told

How, on returning from the fields of fame,
He, for a necklace fashioned out of gold,
As links of his triumphant trophy, chose
The heads that he had smitten off from foes.

The Queen of Beauty gave, to deck my crest,
Her favor, and I dangled at my side

De Maupassant

A cane for scimitar, and forth, in quest
Of some adventure, stepped with knightly
pride;

And at the flowers, with valiant arm, I hewed;
And all the lawn with bud and blossom strewed.

And in the open air, a seat of stone
I covered with a mossy cushion green;
And this I counted as a royal throne.

I hated even kings who overween,
And, for a royal crown to deck my brow,
I chose a garland from a budding bough.

Ah! lapped in happiness the days went by;
And once a fair companion joined my side;
Nor was the maid reluctant to comply,

When my bright crown, my court, my kingdom wide
I offered her, and pointed o'er the main,
To all the castles I had built in Spain.

Beneath the chestnut-trees she took her seat;
And she was beautiful, and in her eye,
Liquid and blue and bright, I seemed to meet
Another universe, another sky;
And at her feet I sat the whole day long,
As if I listened to some dreamland song.

Discovery

Ah, wherefore did I leave that cheerful place,
Why did I fling away the happiness
Of gazing on that maiden's tender face?

Why was Columbus filled with such distress,
When, thro' the fading vapors of the night,
He saw a new world rising into sight?



TO A CHILD



HY dost thou weep, my
child ? for hast thou found
So soon the thorns that
hem life's pathway round ?
Run, weave thee garlands
of the summer flowers !
Tears ill become thy fresh
and tender hours.

All has its season, thine is meant for song ;
'Tis thine to sing, my sweet, the summer long.
Run, with light step across the thickets leap,
For all the world seems sad, when children
weep,

And all creation happy when they smile again.
Like bursts of sunlight after summer rain,
Smiles on the lips of childhood e'er should
play,

And birds beside their cradles pour their lay,
For God bends listening, 'mid the choiring
throng,

To children's laughter and the wild bird's song.

ON THE
DEATH OF LOUIS BOUILHET



DEAD is my master, dead;
oh, why should fate
Have smitten one so kind,
so good, so great?
Thus, Lord, thou choosest
by thy side to place,
Bereaving us, the loftiest
of our race.

Feeble our generation, so we die,
In vain to heaven the sad survivors cry.
Does heaven rejoice when we our best resign?
Why didst thou make them mortal, Power
divine?

Can their death add to glory such as Thine?
Dead is he? What is death? There naught
we see

Remaining, but a lifeless effigy.
Naught of the man; not e'en the kindly smile,
Which won the hearts it never could beguile;
That seemed to whisper with a look benign,

De Maupassant

"Thou art my friend; I love thee, friend of mine."

That intellectual eye, kind, open, clear, —
O what a doom, within the grave to bear
Obstruction's fixity, buried beneath
The boundless, unplumbed mystery of death.
Yet since from dust of earth the buried corn
Starts forth again and in new life is born,
Since naught can perish in creation's range,
Since all is but development and change,
We know that he who left us yesterday,
Has but laid down his earthly cloak of clay;
But whither has his spirit sped away?
Has it left us to join the company
Of the great brother-dead who looked for it on
high?

What unknown world before its vision lies,
This soul, that was a poet, one whose eyes
Were wide with wonder and with love's surprise.

Oft from those eyes a glance of splendor came
As potent and as dazzling as a flame.

Now those fixed orbs our inmost soul affright,
They seemed amazed as if they knew to sight
Returned, alert, the soul that once had lent
them light!

Ah, had you seen his orchard blooming gay,

On the Death of Louis Bouilhet

And heard him chat with me the hours away;
How the old poet bared his heart to me
In talk — then buried in deep reverie
Would leave me, for the man was nature's
child.

Ah, poor Bouilhet! he dead? the good? the
mild

In spirit? — for indeed he seemed to me,
A new Messiah who had brought the key
To that high heaven where slumbers poesy.
And now behold him dead, gone is his soul
To that eternal world which is the goal
Of genius, yet his spirit from on high
Doubtless still sees us, and can hear the cry
Of one whose heartlove for the dead can never
die!



CONCERNING THE COMPLETE WRITINGS
OF GUY DE MAUPASSANT AND THE
FRENCH ACADEMY.



THE French Academy had its birth in the drawing-rooms of the Hôtel Rambouillet. Conrart and Voiture, aided by the influence of Cardinal Richelieu, crystallized the genius of the French literature of their time into the Institution which is now known by that name. The Academy has been the nurse of literature in France ever since then, and has thrown off four other branches, which cover the regions of philosophy, science, and art. This interesting little bit of history has a direct bearing upon the publication of the Complete Writings of Guy de Maupassant, now in English for the first time. When M. Walter Dunne was ready to publish the complete

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De Maupassant

writings of Guy de Maupassant in English, he wrote to each occupant of the forty arm-chairs of the French Academy, telling them of his enterprise and asking them to cable their opinion of De Maupassant's achievement and genius. With this request they complied, and here are a few of the cable greetings:

Un des plus grands écrivains du siècle.

SARDOU.

Translation — One of the greatest writers of the century.

Maupassant, réaliste cruel, excellent écrivain.

FRANÇOIS COPPÉE.

Translation — Maupassant was cruelly realistic and a superb writer.

La plume de Maupassant, incisive et colorée, est excellemment française.

SULLY-PRUDHOMME.

Translation — Maupassant's pen was incisive, full of color, and essentially French.

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The Complete Writings

Le plus amusant des pessimistes, le plus tragique des vaudevillistes.

BRUNETIÈRE.

Translation — The most amusing of the pessimists and the most serious of the vaudevillists.

Maupassant incarna le clair génie de notre langue.

MELCHIOR DE VOGUË.

Translation — In Maupassant the transparent genius of our language was incarnated.

Maupassant, grand parmi nos plus grands écrivains.

LUDOVIC HALÉVY.

Translation — Maupassant is great among our greatest writers.

La vie et Maupassant, lequel imita l'autre ?

FAGUET.

Translation — Life and De Maupassant: which copied the other ?

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De Maupassant

Ecrivain savoureux, conteur excellent, romancier plus indiscutable.

ANDRÉ THEURIET.

Translation — Racy as a writer, a splendid storyteller, and a romance writer beyond dispute.

WHAT OTHERS THINK OF DE MAUPASSANT.

Here are a few pregnant criticisms of De Maupassant by Russian, English, Spanish, and French Critics of note. They tell more forcibly than any essay the classic worth of the great Norman writer.

ANDREW LANG :

“The tenderness of Fielding, the graphic power of Smollett, the biting satire of Dean Swift, mingled and reincarnated in Gallic guise and named De Maupassant.”

ANATOLE FRANCE, Author of *La Vie Littéraire* ; Member of the French Academy :

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The Complete Writings

“Maupassant was *the* painter of humanity in words. Without hatred, without love, without anger, without pity, merciless as fire, immutable as fate, he holds a mirror up to life without attempting judgment.”

JAMES FITZMAURICE-KELLEY, Member of the Spanish Academy :

“Maupassant’s style is exceedingly simple and exceedingly strong. He was the Father of the Modern Short Story.”

PAUL BOURGET, Member of the French Academy :

“It is enough that the critics of to-day place Guy de Maupassant among our classic writers. He has his place in the ranks of pure French genius with the Regniers, the La Fontaines, the Molières.”

LEON TOLSTOÏ:

“Maupassant’s *Une Vie* is, to my mind, the greatest novel produced in France since Victor Hugo wrote *Les Misérables*. . . . I

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De Maupassant

love his sincerity, his power, and the beauty of his style.”

HENRY JAMES :

“Maupassant achieved the miracle of a fresh tone. He was a man of genius to whom short cuts were disclosed in the watches of the night.”

ÉMILE FAGUET, Member of the French Academy :

“Compared with Maupassant’s novels all others, even Hugo’s, seem forced and unreal to me. To outward impressions his mind and pen offered the sensitiveness of a photographic film.”

RENÉ DOUMIC :

“Voltaire said that no one annotated Racine because the only possible note would be ‘Admirable, sublime!’ So, at the end of Maupassant’s stories we can only write: ‘This is perfection!’ ”

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The Complete Writings

DE MAUPASSANT—THE CLASSIC REALIST

The school of romantic realism began with Prosper Mérimée, was continued by Balzac, and culminated in De Maupassant. De Maupassant bears the title, in France, England and the United States, of the "Father of the Modern Short Story." His ten long years of study under Flaubert gave him an insight into Flaubert's methods, which, joined to his own magnificent powers of description, enabled him at one bound — by the publication of the story called *Boule de Suif* — to attain the highest rung of the ladder.

THE NEW YORK HERALD, REVIEWING THE VOLUMES, SAYS:

"These Romances deal with innumerable details of the human comedy as it presented itself to Maupassant's ever-observant eyes. He has given us tales of travel and adventure, of mystery and dread, of strange medical experiences, of love and lust, of comedy and

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De Maupassant

of pathos that hovers upon the borders of comedy, of tragedy that is sometimes hideous and sometimes grotesque. He has painted the humors and the sorrows in the lives of his native Normandy's peasantry and gentry; he has described the petty miseries of Parisian clerks and *cocottes*, he has satirized the follies of Parisian society. In presenting this large panorama, moving to tears and laughter, the artist *remains himself unmoved*. He preserves his sanity and clearness of view even in the tales which we now know were written when he himself was hovering on the verge of insanity. He is as impartial as nature, as pitiless as that higher art which simulates nature."

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The Complete Writings

CRITICAL OPINIONS OF PROMINENT MEMBERS OF THE ALLIANCE-FRANÇAISE IN AMERICA.

GEORGES CANTY, Formerly Chief of the Beaux-Arts in Paris, and now Secretary of the Alliance-Française, New York City.

“M. WALTER DUNNE,
135 Fifth Avenue, New York City.

Dear Sir:

You have done me the honor to ask my opinion of the genius of De Maupassant. This is what I think of him:

Maupassant without doubt was one of the greatest writers of the nineteenth century. To strength of expression no one more than he has joined the clarity, the exactness, and superb elegance of style, which above all are the essential qualities of the French tongue.

He has not painted man either better or worse than he really is, but he has painted man in all his true humanity.

He has given us the reality of life, without illusion — admittedly with some extremely strong presenta-

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De Maupassant

tions — but always with a verity and sincerity, and also with such a complete effacement of his own personality that he compels us to accept him as the Prince of Realism in the highest sense of the term, and to place him with Balzac, with Flaubert, and with Zola, while at the same time he shows himself superior to them by reason of the wondrous simplicity of his style. GEORGES CANTY."

PROF. J. DYNELEY PRINCE, Professor
in Columbia University, New York City.

"M. WALTER DUNNE,
135 Fifth Avenue, New York City.

Dear Sir:

I am delighted that we are to have a complete edition of the Works of Guy de Maupassant. No author has excelled him in the qualities of lucid observation and exact description. What is still more important for the thinking public is the matchless power with which he was able, in many cases, to penetrate the veil of outward appearance and reach the true but hidden aspect of visible conditions.

Yours very truly,

J. DYNELEY PRINCE."

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The Complete Writings

PRINCIPAL OF INSTITUTE TISNÉ, 533
West End Avenue, New York.

“M. WALTER DUNNE,
135 Fifth Avenue, New York City.

Dear Sir:

Of Maupassant it is difficult to say which is most admirable: the clear beauty of style, the deep insight into human nature, the strange faculty to picture and to move men's passions, or the simplicity with which great overpowering effects are wrought.

Very sincerely yours,

HENRIETTE TISNÉ.”



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